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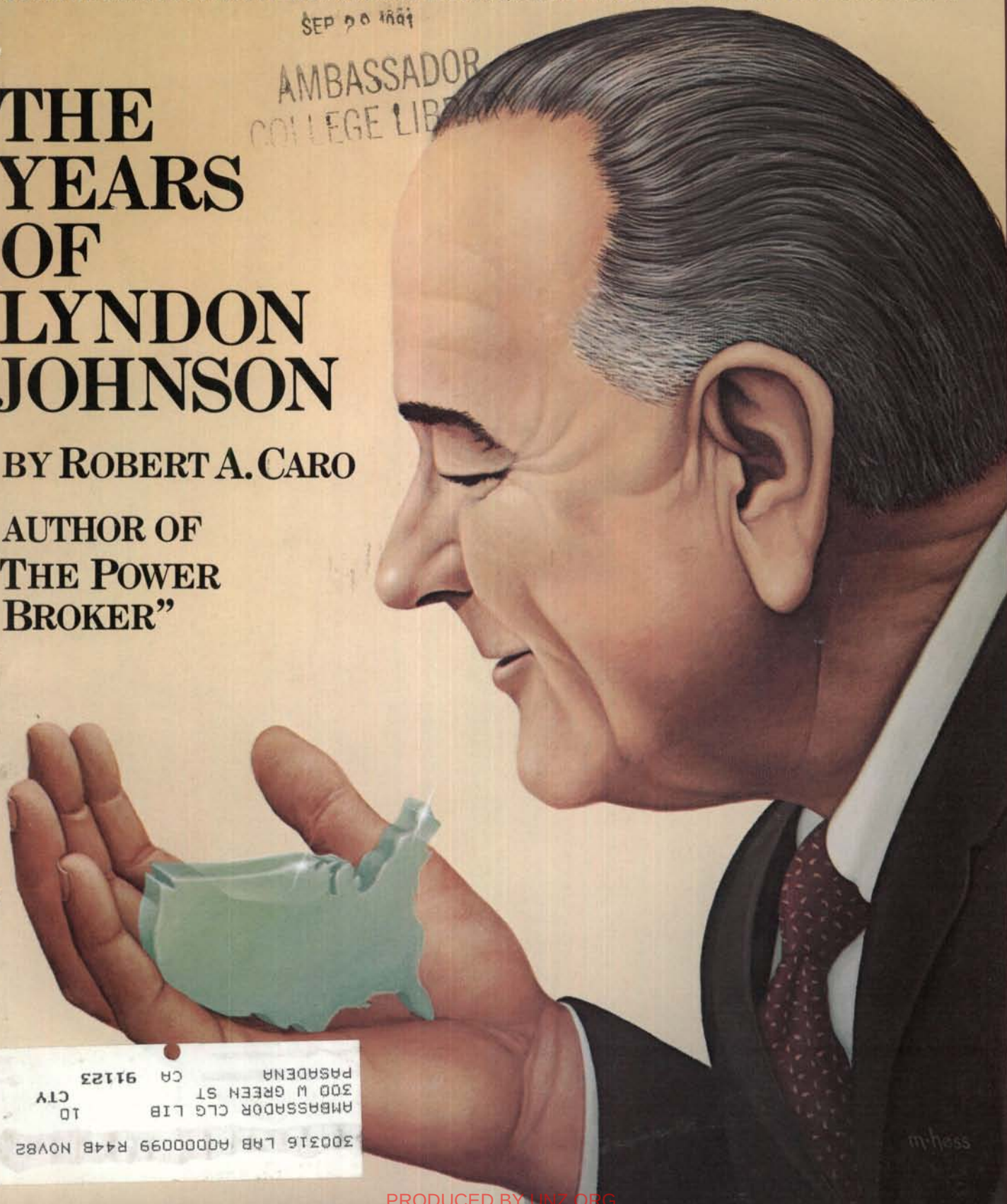
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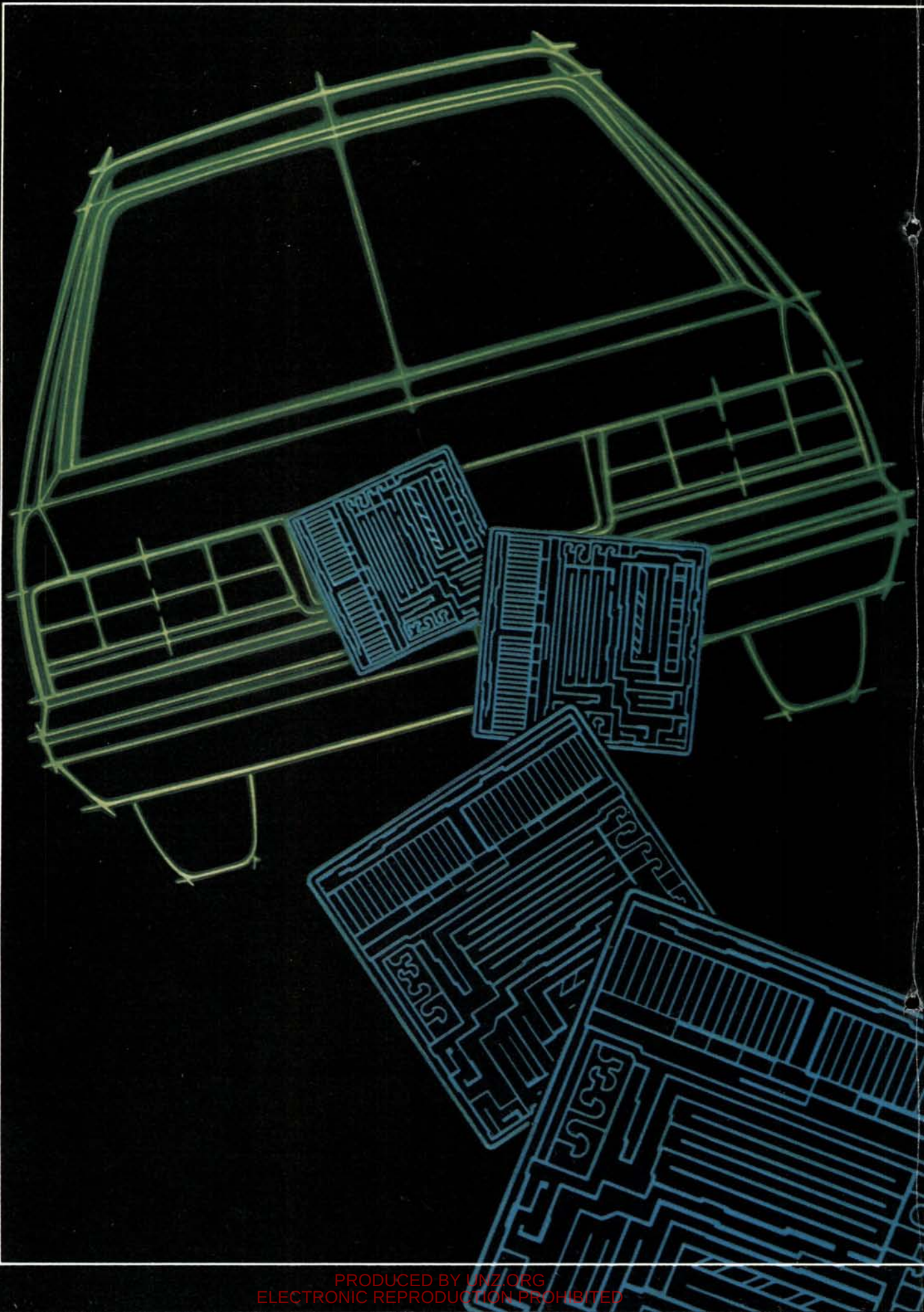
BY ROBERT A. CARO

AUTHOR OF
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The Impact of Belief

Our corporate neighbor in Hartford, Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, has done a national survey uncommon in its subject and sweep. The survey was on Americans' values. It sought to find out the extent to which traditional values prevail in today's hurly-burly society and why people feel and act as they do. A parallel purpose was to identify our leaders' judgements and attitudes and to compare them with the values of the public at large.

More than 2,000 hour-long telephone interviews were conducted with members of the general public by a research firm commissioned by the insurer. An eight-page questionnaire was mailed to 4,383 leaders in nine fields. The responses totaled 1,762, extraordinarily high for such a survey.

When the 2.4 million bits of data were all analyzed, a pervasive thread ran throughout. One dominant factor was found consistently and forcefully to shape the values and behavior of Americans. That factor is level of religious commitment. The impact of religious belief, the survey showed, reaches far beyond the political realm. It penetrates "virtually every dimension of American experience."

The study identifies a cohesive and powerful group, about 45 million strong, as "intensely religious," together with another large group of people who are "latently" religious. "Our findings suggest that the increasing impact of religion on our social and political institutions may be only the beginning of a trend that could change the face of America," Connecticut Mutual notes.

The findings throw light on the political clout of such organizations as the Moral Majority. They suggest, too, that the highly religious may well be the most vocal force of the '80s, just as the disaffected

were the most vocal in the '60s and '70s.

The growing influence of religious belief mirrors something deeper than the alienation and turmoil of the '60s and '70s. It is rooted in the uncertainties and dilemmas of getting by "in a society saturated with choices," the study points out. People are clinging to religion because it provides "some measure of order in their lives, some restraint on the cultural injunction to pursue happiness... to its farther limits."

The survey documented a widening gulf between Americans and their leaders. Not only does the public lack confidence in its leaders, but fully half the leaders questioned believe the people cannot be counted on to select the caliber of leadership the nation needs.

A curious finding: The public pinpoints honesty far and away as the quality it wants most in its leaders—yet honesty wasn't even among the top three qualities cited by leaders themselves in response to what they felt the people look for in a leader. Apart from religious figures, business leaders were found to be most in accord with public values among leadership in the fields covered: law and justice, education, government, business, military, news media, religion, science, and voluntary associations.

Of all contemporary issues, moral questions reflect the sharpest division between Americans and their leaders. Across the entire range of moral issues, leaders are consistently more liberal and permissive in their judgements. This suggests America's leaders are out of touch with "the current of faith which appears to be gathering strength" throughout the land.

Sort of reminds us of the fellow trailing a band of citizens on the run, panting: "Lo, there go the people. I must catch up to them. For I am their leader."



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FOOD & POPULATION GROWTH

It seems inconsistent for Julian Simon ("World Population Growth," August *Atlantic*) to argue on the one hand that population increase is unrelated to output per capita "from 1650 onward" but on the other hand assert that "the number of improvements depends on the number of people using their heads," since such improvements, if they were economically significant, would surely have a positive effect on output per capita. Then, too, Simon seems to hint at a causal nexus when he says, "The standard of living has risen along with the size of the world's population since the beginning of recorded time," ignoring the possibilities that unacknowledged factors may have permitted a rise in standard of living *despite* the growth of population, or that the rise would have been greater or more uniform over the world had the population growth rate been less.

I wonder if Simon's opportunistic use of correlational data is intended to conceal his advocacy of a value system in which only those facets of life that can be easily quantified in dollars are deemed important.

PHILIP J. CHAMBERLAIN
Lansing, Mich.

Economist Julian Simon states ("World Food Supplies," July *Atlantic*) that the production of food in the world "has no long-run, physical limit." There are physical limits to annual food-calorie production on earth, however, as most high school physics students could show by multiplying the annual solar energy striking the earth by the maximum possible photosynthetic conversion efficiency. Of course, actual food production for humans will always be far below this level, because of limits on the supply of water and plant nutrients and because nonhuman creatures share world production of plant calories with us.

JOHN HARTE
Berkeley, Calif.

Mr. Simon's viewpoint is an example of the kind of thinking that would

encourage the ongoing genetic development of the featherless chicken because it might well be economically efficient to prepare the carcasses of such chickens for mass food production for our ever-expanding population. I wonder if Mr. Simon ever gives thought to the ideas that our planet does not exist solely for the benefit of mankind and that, indeed, the earth might be environmentally in better condition if the human species had never evolved.

RONALD N. DAY
Lemon Grove, Calif.

Julian Simon replies:

What possible "unacknowledged factors" does Mr. Chamberlain think "may have permitted a rise in standard of living despite the growth in population"? If fewer people would have produced as much or more knowledge, how come the United States produces more science than Sweden, and India produces more than Thailand? Furthermore, solid statistical evidence suggests that greater economic demand leads to more inventions, while greater output in an industry leads to a faster rate of growth of productivity in that industry. And of course more people generally lead to greater demands and higher output, hence promoting invention and productivity gains.

As to Chamberlain's paragraph beginning, "I wonder . . .," the answer is no, my values do not include only market goods.

As John Harte (a physicist) must know, the "solar energy [now] striking the earth" is not an absolute limit to the energy that we might use for growing food. Under discussion by practical persons are giant mirrors in space to reflect sunlight onto earth during "nighttime," Gerard O'Neill's planned agriculture in space colonies, and nuclear energy for artificial light and heat. It is a mistake, historical and theoretical, to assume that the limits of the past will be the limits of the future. Our imagination expands the limits without calculable physical bound. That imagination is the real source of the energy we use.

As for Mr. Day's contention that "our planet does not exist solely for the bene-

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fit of mankind," my own view is that, as Protagoras said, "Man is the measure of all things." Or, as Einstein put it, "Concern for man himself and his fate must always form the chief interest of all technical endeavors. Never forget this in the midst of your diagrams and equations."

THE GAIA HYPOTHESIS

Lewis Thomas chose to attack ("Debating the Unknowable," July *Atlantic*), by trivializing them, my criticisms of James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis.

Gaia is not a "respectable" scientific hypothesis. That doesn't mean that it is wrong, but it does mean that one cannot deal with it in the "respectable" scientific literature while articulate and persuasive popularizers of science such as Thomas, Lynn Margulis, and Lovelock himself remain at liberty to present it to the much larger audience that is reached by their writings. Gaia is, I'm afraid, only one of many such metascientific world views to gain popularity in this way.

Lovelock (*Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*, Oxford University Press, 1979) claims that the biosphere has built-in homeostatic mechanisms (in sum deified as "Gaia") that keep the physical and chemical properties of the earth's atmosphere and oceans within boundaries hospitable to life, and that the busy cybernetic engineers that hold everything in balance are in fact the countless species of creatures both large and small whose activities in any way affect those physical and chemical properties. I doubt that that is true and I also doubt that it could ever be proven.

There is simply no way that any known or imaginable form of natural selection could ever have given rise to a unique superorganism such as Gaia. If she exists at all she's an accident of stupendous improbability.

W. FORD DOOLITTLE
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Lewis Thomas replies:

Dr. Doolittle objects to my comparing the complexity of the regulatory mechanisms needed for keeping the human body in homeostasis with what would be needed by the earth's life if the whole earth were to behave like a vast organ-

ism, as the Gaia hypothesis proposes. I wish, by the way, he hadn't used the word "deified," which embarrasses discussion. But Doolittle has something else in mind as well: the improbability of evolving such mechanisms for the earth's life by natural selection.

I agree that the Lovelock notion cannot be proven, but this does not mean that the reductionist information for settling the argument lies forever beyond reach. What it needs is a lot more research of the reductionist sort, the very kind of research in which Doolittle himself is engaged with distinction. The intricate details of the autonomic functioning of any organism remain largely unexplained, also needing more research. I have trouble thinking beyond the stupendous improbability of a human being, but here we all are.

As to the role of selection in a global system, a lot depends on what selective value should be assigned to cooperation over three and a half billion years, and whether new genetic arrangements fostering symbiosis are commonplace or freakish. Also, on the survival price for environmental ravagement that has to be paid by any species doing the ravaging. I think this makes a good problem for the public mind, and an especially timely one for science in this century and ahead.

THIS WILL NEVER DO

The opening sentence of James Atlas's essay "In Praise of Dispraise" (August *Atlantic*) illustrates the dangers of quoting from memory. Citing Francis Jeffrey's famous slaughter of Wordsworth's "The Excursion" in the *Edinburgh Review*, Mr. Atlas writes that Jeffrey began his attack with: "This will not do." What Jeffrey actually wrote was: "This will never do." It is the one sentence of his that students of the period remember these days. I am surprised that Mr. Atlas's ear did not warn him off his version, which decidedly limps; for whatever his faults, Jeffrey always wrote with a fine sense of cadence.

JOHN I. ADES
Edwardsville, Ill.

Mr. Ades is correct. However, the error was not made by Mr. Atlas; it occurred in the editing of his article.

The Editors

ADVICE & CONSENT

Mavis Gallant's account of Fernand Raynaud's sketch "J'suis pas un Imbécile" has been so badly distorted to support her commentary that one wonders if her whole piece ("Paris: The Taste of a New Age," April *Atlantic*) might better be described as fiction. Raynaud never says, "I'm not idiotic. I can't be. I'm French." The phrase is "J'suis pas un imbécile puisque je suis douanier" ("I'm not an imbecile since I am a customs officer").

The sketch is funny because the man is a customs officer who doesn't like foreigners and considers his "profession" as highly prestigious. The character is proud to be *douanier*, not *français* or even *douanier français*. The point is that "... the collocation of 'I'm not idiotic' and 'I'm French'" does not exist outside of Gallant's imagination. Therefore, it could hardly "... [seem] so self-evident that the audience would sit in perplexed stillness, waiting for the joke." The character is very French and very stupid and recognized immediately as such by the audience. There is no silence, no "perplexed stillness," and no bitterness.

JOHN WEINER
College Park, Md.

Regarding Michael Lenehan's piece "The Last of the Pure Baseball Men" (August *Atlantic*), Calvin Griffith is not the *only* baseball owner financing his "operation solely on baseball revenues." The O'Malley family of Los Angeles owns *its* team and makes its (considerable) profit from it and it alone. (The stadium is no small potatoes, but that came *because* of the team.)

LAWRENCE S. DIETZ
Santa Monica, Calif.

Eleanor Munro says (Letters to the Editor, August *Atlantic*) that "... India, far from experiencing the starvation Mr. Hardin describes, has in fact been exporting rice to Bangladesh and China." The fact that India's government sells rice (at a profit) in no way guarantees that the rice was surplus or that India's own people aren't starving, any more than the United States's history of farm subsidies guarantees that all Americans are well-fed.

SALLIE TISDALE
Eugene, Ore.

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REPORTS & COMMENT

KYOTO

A GORGEOUS "NA" MELODY

*In Japan's strange quasi-English, a
"funky babe" buys a "waishatsu"
at a "depaato"*



SURPRISINGLY, AND RATHER heroically, many Japanese seem to feel it is their duty to speak English. On a train or in a restaurant, it is common for an American to be pulled aside and asked, "Excuse me, may I practice my English?" While by no means all Japanese speak English, most know a little, because it has been compulsory in the schools since the late nineteenth century (excepting World War II). Very few Americans, of course, know even a little Japanese, and the language is so difficult to read and write, even for natives, that a myth holding foreigners incapable of speaking it is widely—somewhat proudly—promulgated. When a foreigner can manage more than a basic

question in Japanese, native speakers are often astonished. The Japanese preoccupation with English—both the language as a whole and the bits embedded in Japanese sentences, often without the slightest sense of irony or incongruity—is paradoxical. English, having infiltrated the vocabulary of every age group and profession, is more of a presence in Japan than in any European country I have visited. It has made far greater inroads into the Japanese culture than into that of France, where the purity of the native language is seen to be in critical condition. Why, then, does the Japanese grasp of the contours of English seem so slippery?

I came here, to Kyoto, nine months ago with my husband, who is doing research on the Japanese legal system. Since our arrival, I've kept a notebook recording the English to be encountered on the street, in the shops, and on television. There are the coffee-shop chains with their bewildering mottoes: "World Smell in Cup, Full," or "Persistent Pursuit of Dainty." There is the tomato juice advertised as the "Red Mix for City Actives." There are the notebooks and plastic shopping bags

plastered with maxims ("Make every day a special memorable day of joy by looking at the bright side of everything in high spirits") or what might be called jokes—except that one couldn't laugh *with* the joke-tellers: "FUNKY BABE. Let's call a funky girl 'Funky Babe.' Girls, open-minded, know how to swing. Love to feel everything rather than think. They must all be nice girls."

A pornographic magazine offers advice on "How To Sex." James Dean's picture is often paired with this quasi-poem, printed on shopping bags of various designs: "Image of Solitude/ An Atmosphere of Young Beast/ A Dark, Shy, Faint Smile/ Injured Soul for Love/ Jimmy Forever." A thirst-quenching drink is called Pocari Sweat; a powdered cream-substitute for coffee goes by the name of Creap. Attached to a pair of HALF brand jeans I bought, a tag read: "Someday you will know what is on your mind when you try HALF After Shower." Somehow, I doubted it.

Perhaps because written Japanese is so difficult, many students instinctively shy away from English textbooks, and greatly prefer conversation to composition. This might account, in part, for



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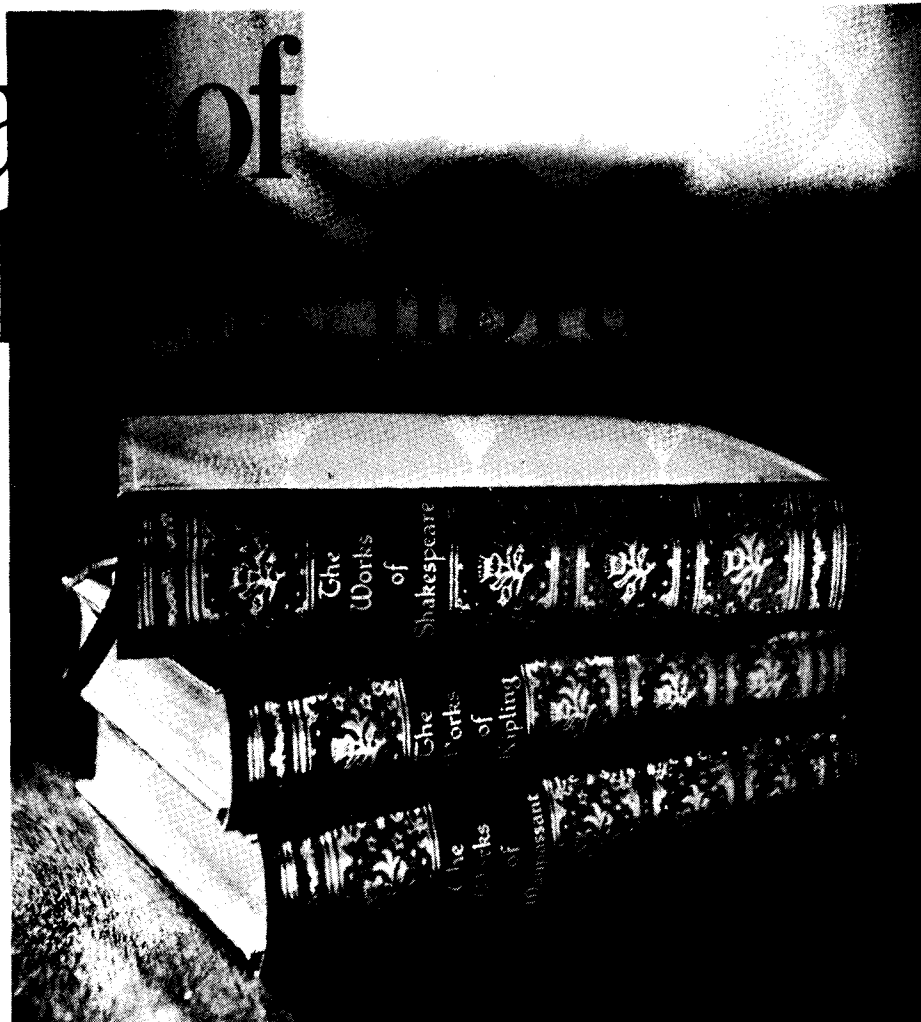
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those inscrutable ads. But one message is clear: native speakers of English are not being hired even to proofread the majority of English used commercially here. Soon after I came to Kyoto, I got a part-time job teaching English to engineers at a forklift factory. Proudly, the "student leader" offered me a glossy, full-color booklet in English about his company. The introduction began, "At the present period requirements, environmental integrity, restoration of humanity brought from public nuisance are become biggest problems in the civilized countries." I read the entire booklet, in the hope of finding wholly right sentences, of which only a handful appeared. How was it that the directors of Nippon Yusoki Ltd., a company that boasted a major share of the battery-powered forklift market in Japan and a growing percentage in the United States, had not thought fit to check and double-check this booklet, when it paid me and my American colleagues nearly twenty dollars an hour to sit around and chat with the guys once a week?

When one asks a Japanese why he or she is studying English—after school, after work, during work—the answer is usually that English is an international language, and essential for communicating with foreigners. The major cities are bursting with new English-conversation schools, which accept all sorts of native speakers as teachers, and pay them handsomely. The nature of the schools themselves varies widely, from strictly run programs within major companies, on company time, to (a recent innovation in Tokyo) late-night "English-conversation bars" with topless instructors. Private students offer as much as fifty dollars an hour, and typically shower their teachers with expensive gifts: cakes, roast hams, bottles of whiskey. Japan's economic miracle is tied inextricably to international—particularly English—communication, and yet, after a short period here, one begins to wonder if the English sought at such pains communicates at all.

I BEGAN TO REALIZE that the mystery could be solved only with a vast network of clues, some of them contradictory but hardly new—as old, in fact, as Japan itself. In about 400 A.D., having no writing system, Japan adopted Chinese as the official court language. Gradually, and with many necessary transformations, Japanese meanings

and sounds began to be assigned to Chinese characters. Sir George Sansom, the noted historian of Japanese culture, says that by the eighth century, "the vocabulary of Japanese came to contain a great number of Chinese words, principally those for which there was no Japanese equivalent, but often adopted for reasons of pedantry or fashion rather than convenience. . . . The prestige of the language, the script, and the literature of China was overwhelming . . . everyone who valued his standing must have a smattering." The "smattering" of English now employed in Japan has two functions. One is the avowed purpose: enabling the Japanese to communicate with foreigners. But the second, I realized as I began studying the language and reading simple advertisements, is enabling the Japanese to communicate *with each other*.

"Japanese English," by which is meant English words transliterated into a rough Japanese approximation, and then often abbreviated (*apaato* for apartment, *danpa* for dance party), manifests exactly the phenomenon Sansom described: the abandonment of native words to show that one "knows" foreign ones. An ancient script of some fifty phonetic symbols, called *katakana*, is used primarily to represent the burgeoning number of foreign words, and thus makes up an ever greater percentage of the written language. While the pronunciation of loan words in any language tends to be a corruption, *katakana*, by spelling out the mistakes, legitimizes them. ("Loan word" is itself a misnomer—for these words will never be returned, and most of us wouldn't take them back in such battered condition.) I began to learn *katakana* so that I could read coffee-shop menus, which generally offer foreign foods. But recasting these Japanese letters back into phonetic English, I discovered, produced comic results: *pain jiūsu* (pineapple juice), *karēraisu* (curry with rice), and *hamu tōsuto* (toasted ham sandwich). Because there are a number of sounds in English that simply do not exist in Japanese ("th" and "l," for example), the double and triple uses of *katakana* symbols inevitably cause confusion for an American. At the Kentucky Bruegrass (sic) Cafe, for instance, I puzzled over whether *ranchi setto* signified "ranch set" (i.e., Western-style food) or "lunch set." It turned out to mean the latter—which any Japanese

would have known. This "English" is not the international language one hears the praises of but queerly insular. The fact is rarely acknowledged, but this English is really just Japanese.

It is not only the inadequacy of *katakana* in representing English sounds that makes "Japanese English" so idiosyncratic. Admittedly, one may be embarrassed in a *depaato* (department store) to ask for a *nekutai* (necktie), *moningu* (morning coat), *shuraksu* (slacks), and *shatsu* (shirt), all of which are now the most commonly used terms for these items. But it's when you have to ask for a *waishatsu*—or, rather, a *pinku waishatsu*—that it hurts. A "white shirt" used to indicate a dress shirt, but now that others are available, one must ask for a pink white shirt. Gathering prodigiously, and yet only here and there, the Japanese have pulled English up from its roots of meaning and context. (Japanese are sometimes surprised to learn that English vocabulary is not originally their own. "How do you say 'rehabirition' in English?" my hairdresser asked me.) Since the syllable *na* is often required in Japanese between an adjective and the noun it modifies, one can turn on the radio and hear a disc jockey embed in an orthodox Japanese sentence the information that he is about to play a "*gōjiasu na merodi*" (gorgeous *na* melody). Because the verb "to do" is often used in Japanese, one can turn on the television and see a line of happy blond Americans in ski suits, crying out in unison: "Do Ski!" Perhaps because the Japanese equivalent of "let's" is widely used, the English expression gets a workout on sweatshirts: LET'S ACTIVE, or LET'S SEX; or—a double whammy—LET'S ALL DO SPORTS AND SWEAT.

Then there are the English-style words that are entirely Japanese inventions: *sarariman* ("salaryman"), for example. *O Eru* ("OL," or "office lady") is his female counterpart. (I am told that this expression replaced the "BG," or "business girl," of a generation ago.) It's been difficult to explain to my students that real English words can form inapt combinations; that *moningu sabisu*, even if written as "morning service," is more likely to connote church than breakfast. Similarly, *manshion* ("mansion") never means "large apartment building" to us, as it now does to the Japanese. Even fluent speakers of English, understandably, are confused

by these scores of false cognates. A Japanese friend recently told me in English that a mutual acquaintance was disappointed with her arranged marriage. "She never wanted to live in a house," my friend said. "She'd rather live in a mansion."

♦ Of course, *katakana* English is not the sort I found in the Nippon Yusoki booklet, meant for a worldwide market. But it lurks in the background, as the sort of "English" its writers feel truly familiar with. Although change has come rapidly here, especially since World War II, it was only in 1854, after all, that Commodore Perry reopened Japan (after some 260 years of isolation) to contact with the West. Disregarding the outward signs of cosmopolitanism reflected in GNP, the Japanese remain a highly unc cosmopolitan people—insatiably curious, and yet curiously innocent; easily astonished at the ways and even, it seems, the existence of other races. Dubbed reruns of *Star-sky and Hutch* or *Bewitched* are shown on television every day; the public broadcasting system is running the BBC Shakespeare series twice, both dubbed and with subtitles. But a day rarely passes when a child, seeing us on the street, does not stop gape-mouthed, clinging to his mother with one hand and pointing with the other. "*Gaijin!*" (foreigners!) he cries. As long as the distinction matters so much, the fascination with foreign languages is likely to remain, in part, private and self-limiting.

Another factor, perhaps just as significant, in the dissemination of fractured English in Japan (as Jack Seward relates in his perceptive study *Japanese in Action*) is the concept of "face." Once a Japanese has been labeled an "English expert," any correction of his use of the language is apt to become extremely embarrassing, even if the international communiqués he is hired to write are indecipherable. Seward describes his frustration, as the ostensible English proofreader at a Japanese firm, at the way secretaries deliberately circumvented him and sent off faulty letters on the insistence of their superiors. The Japanese tradition of lifetime employment, which so intrigues American management students now, can lead us to assume that the experts Seward despaired of years ago are still doing their stuff. When I taught at an after-hours "foreign studies institute" in

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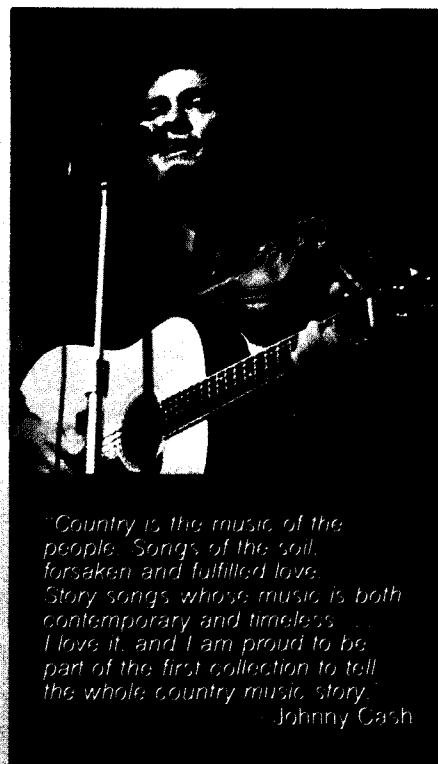
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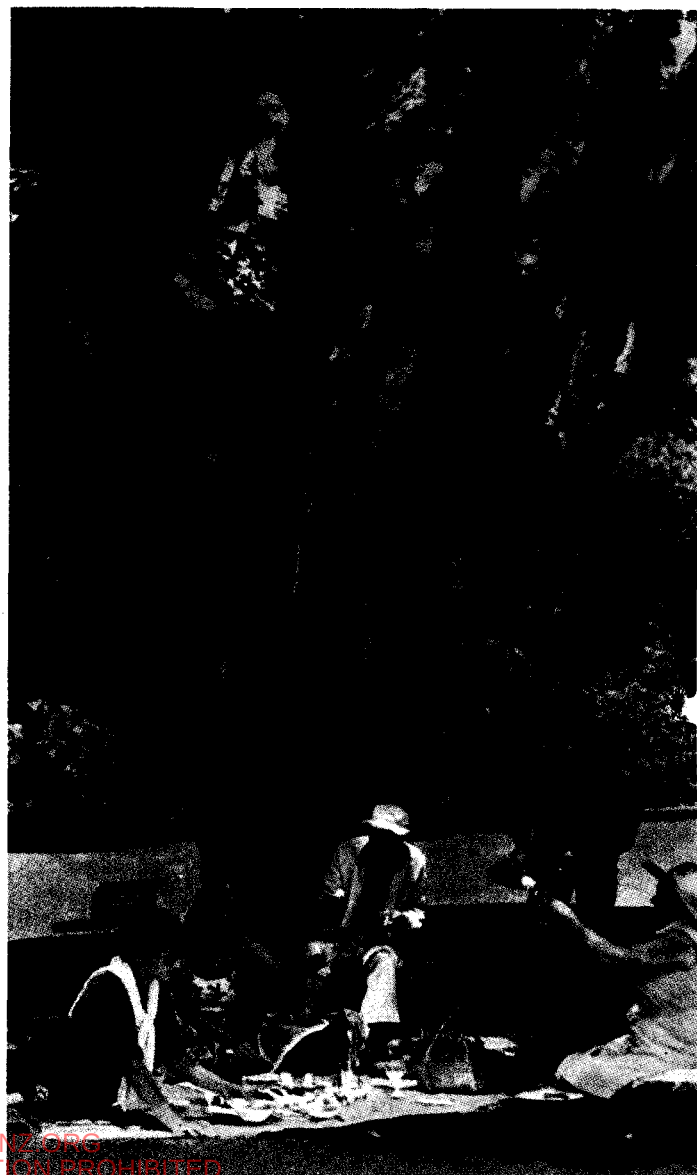
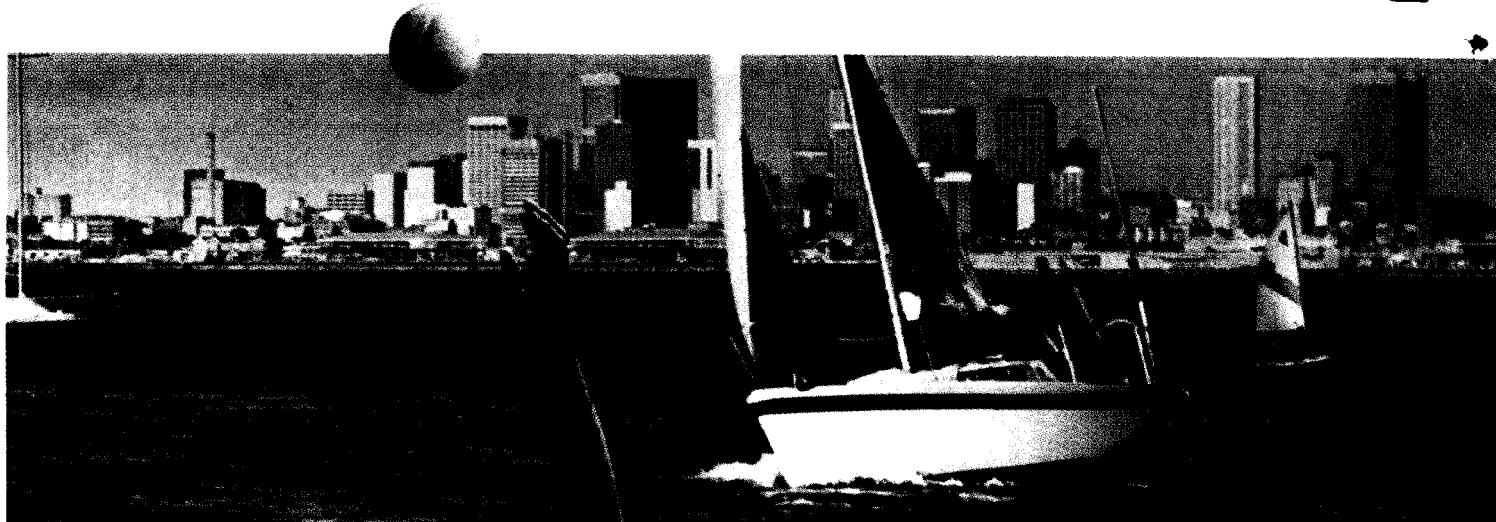
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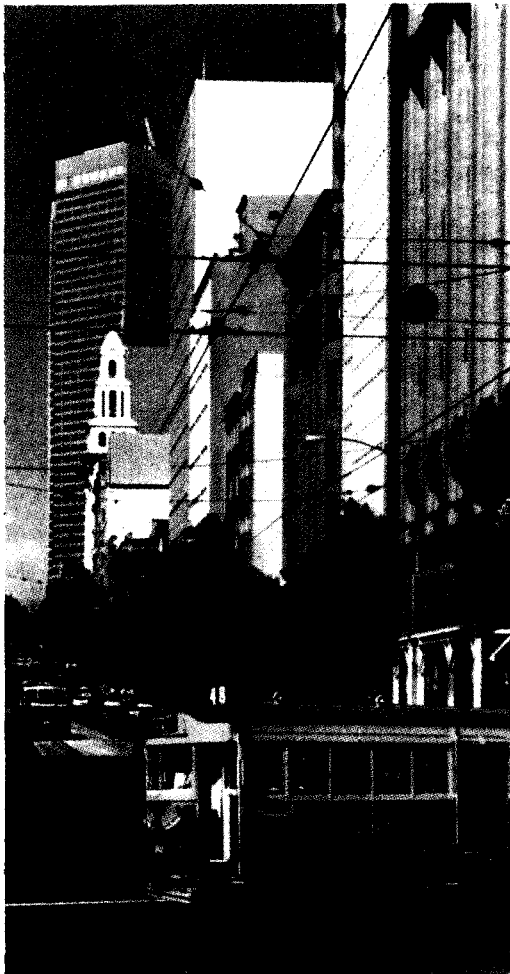
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Kyoto, attended mainly by high school and college students, I learned that it is an unwritten rule that all students pass their tests and move on, no matter how miserably they have performed. This policy contrasted oddly with the infamous competition within the official school system, and yet was one more manifestation of the presumption that once you're supposed to know English, you do.

Paradoxically, the Japanese pull away from knowledge, just as they—as eagerly as any people in the world—seek to grasp it. For the more one knows about matters not Japanese, the less one is like others. In a culture that prizes uniformity, a merely good command of English is apparently more valued than fluency. Millions of parents spend millions of yen every year to have their children learn English, and are, of course, pleased if the children learn. But the newspapers are filled with the laments of those parents who made the mistake of allowing a child to live abroad for a year or more, only to have that child return as a social misfit, ridiculed for special knowledge and hopelessly behind in the study of Japanese.

Two mothers of high school sophomores confided to me that they would like to send their children on a "homestay" with an American family for two or three weeks during summer vacation—an increasingly popular practice. But they feared that an absence of such length might jeopardize their children's college-entrance examinations, yet years away. When I suggested that visiting the U.S. would make the English exam easier, they shared a knowing look and said that I simply didn't understand Japan. In Japan, a boy or girl who requires a few years' extra tutoring in Japanese (which the Japanese themselves consider so difficult that they call it "the devil's language") after a long period abroad, is considered "too late" to begin study at a university or employment at a company, even if fluency in English might have been an asset at work. For a woman the problem is especially acute: by the time she is twenty-five or thirty, many companies expect her to leave their service even if she is unmarried. And she had better be married, for at about the same time it becomes "too late" for her parents or other go-betweens to arrange a marriage.

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"IF THERE IS ONE feature that time after time impresses a student of the cultural history of the Japanese," wrote Sir George Sansom, "it is the malign influence of the linguistic handicap under which they have always suffered." A severe judgment, and yet the mushrooming of Japanese English would seem another factor in confirming it.

The Japanese language is itself a more extreme corruption than most other languages one can think of, for the thousands of ancient Chinese characters grafted onto original Japanese sounds may have as many as ten readings apiece, accreted over time. These characters have been simplified or abandoned so many times that today's college students cannot read even their parents' pre-war notebooks with total comprehension. And yet the "simplified" language as it stands is daunting: three writing systems, two of them phonetic and one ideographic, with more than 1,800 characters required to read the daily newspaper. Clearly, Japanese students might expend their diligence on worthier ends. Borrowing from foreign languages and casting this vocabulary wholly into phonetics must seem comparatively painless. Especially as Japan's concerns grow increasingly international, the debate over whether to convert the entire language to a phonetic system (thus making it immeasurably more accessible to foreigners) may help determine the country's future.

And yet, having studied the ideograms a short while myself, I see their seductive quality. They are lovely; they preserve at a glance the roots of meaning; they take so long to learn that one clings to them like a trophy one never expected to win. Most important, perhaps, the conception of language they represent is not Western. In a country where gratuitous Westernization is often mistaken for modernization, it's a shame, in a way, that so little that is truly unique is left except the written language. It probably cannot, and should not, survive in its present form, and yet the "gorgeous *na* melody" of quasi-English threatening to fill the vacuum is not—to this Westerner, at least—gorgeous at all.

—Mary Jo Salter

Mary Jo Salter, a poet and essayist, now lives and teaches in Japan.



KRAKÓW RUSSOPHOBIA IN POLAND

To the Poles, Muscovites have for centuries been "those barbarians on the peripheries"



"NO DOUBT," CZESLAW Milosz says in *Native Realm*, "every civilization receives a permanent imprint from a period that has been of key importance for it." For Poland, that period was the sixteenth century, which has come to be known as the Golden Age.

From the Wawel Hill, in Kraków, the Polish kings ruled a polyglot empire that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, from the Oder to the Dnieper. Kraków boasted a world-class university whose most famous alumnus, the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, removed Earth—and man with it—from the center of the universe. Poland took in the Renaissance whole, absorbed it, and made contributions of its own, especially in the field of civil liberties. For in those days, Poland was a self-proclaimed *res publica*, dominated by a large class of noblemen who not only elected the king but also extracted for themselves by far the most advanced set of constitutional guarantees in all of Europe: freedom of speech

and print, freedom from unreasonable searches and seizures, freedom of worship.

The power, the prosperity, and most of the territory went the way of Ozymandias, but the Pole's image of himself as a nobleman entitled to certain freedoms has obviously endured. It is the spiritual monument of the Golden Age. The physical monument is the old city of Kraków.

The pure feat of having survived intact in a country where nearly every city has at some point been demolished, of having survived invaders whose avowed mission was to stamp out Polish culture, gives Kraków a kind of supernatural air. It is a beautiful city of spires and domes, of burgher houses, cobblestone streets, Renaissance palaces, studded doors in carved doorways. If it has about it an unaccountable, poignant aura of 1939, this is perhaps because of the unmowed condition of its parks; or the women's hairstyles; or the sepia tint that the whole city takes from its predominant colors of brown, beige, and tan and from its terrible air pollution.

At the heart of Kraków lies the famous market square, the Rynek Główny. With its arcaded Renaissance Cloth Hall, its brown brick Gothic church, its piping musicians, its noisy crowds, and its careening flocks of overfed pigeons, the Rynek can easily hold its own against the Piazza San Marco. It has the additional advantage of functioning as the town's vital center rather than merely as a tourist trap.

My wife and I were there this summer in the midst of a heat wave. In the Rynek, people went about their business in summer dresses and short-sleeved shirts, looking wilted. The white-coated soda-water ladies, seated at their little green carts, squirting their product into unhygienic glasses from a curious bell jar apparatus, did a booming business. No one seemed to mind that the stuff tasted like brimstone. At the cafés under the chestnut trees along the periphery, people with florid faces sat drinking tea and vodka. In the afternoon, the drunks began reeling about on the square in private arabesques. This was a disturbing sight, since few could have been over twenty-five, and they all looked intensely healthy, except for their red noses and oyster eyes. At night, the empty Rynek became their clean, well-

lighted preserve, and they tottered to and fro around the statue of the poet Adam Mickiewicz, laughing and shouting, under the indifferent gaze of the two gray-uniformed *milicja*. One night, a rubber-legged man kept singing "Summertime," in Polish, as his two buddies carried him home; it was strange to hear the butchered Gershwin echoing down the medieval streets.

Kraków was suffering severe shortages of meat, beer, bread, butter, cough medicine, gasoline, toilet paper, and shampoo. There are many shops in the Rynek, and long lines trailed out their doors—thirty or forty persons, more women than men. Few of the food stores carried more than a single product. To make sure of rounding up all the staples, a working woman had to be in her first line by six o'clock in the morning. If, say, the bakery ran out of bread, she'd have to keep hunting after work. "*Nie ma, nie ma, nie ma*" was the constant refrain: no more.

We have a friend named Jadwiga, a professor born and raised in Kraków. "The shortages in the war were *nothing* compared to this," she told us with a funny kind of pride, as though a record had been broken. As we walked through the streets, she would glance with professional interest at everybody's basket. "Oh, look, she got sausage . . . Mmm, that one found eggs somewhere. . . And look, *she* got a whole chicken!" (Jadwiga had waited an hour, clutching sufficient ration coupons for a whole chicken, only to be told that she could have no more than a quarter.)

For some reason, nearly all the shop windows featured dusty green boxes of Turkish tea. There was such a glut that they seemed likely to stay forever, as decoration; but one day Jadwiga got a phone call from her cousin in Wrocław saying that Wrocław had just run out of tea. The next day, twelve of the dusty boxes appeared in the bookcase of Jadwiga's one-room flat.

All this may make Kraków sound grim, but it isn't. True, the people in the lines look tired and anxious, but in the street many faces are happy, uplifted. And everywhere there are flowers. The flower stalls in the Rynek—huge green buckets of roses, mums, daisies, carnations, under colored parasols—are said to be among the most profitable businesses in the city. Bouquets are at the feet of Mickiewicz and on the tomb of Marshal Pilsudski and in the little

shrines to the Virgin on the fronts of houses. Every social call requires flowers, and in the evening, when the young women saunter about in pairs or with their boyfriends, each one carries a long-stemmed flower, wrapped in a paper cone, bloom end held downward.

This, of course, was Karol Wojtyła's see—an incalculable boost to morale in a country where having the archbishop become Pope is like winning some cosmic World Series. What the Poles feel for Wojtyła is difficult to describe, since there is no public figure in the United States who comes close to commanding—or, for that matter, warranting—the same kind of absolute respect. "The world's highest moral authority" is the way the local paper recently referred to him.

The Pope matriculated in Kraków. During the war, he studied philology in the underground university and read poetry in the underground theaters. (*The Acting Person*, his postdoctoral attempt to link phenomenology with Thomism, later earned him recognition in intellectual circles.) A play he wrote after his ordination, *Brother of Our God*, has been exhumed and was running at one of Kraków's largest theaters. It concerns a Krakovian painter who lost a leg in the insurrection of 1863, underwent a religious crisis, and ultimately founded a religious order to help the poor. It is a talky play, long on philosophical anguish and short on dramatic action, and yet in this sophisticated theater town with its eight flourishing repertory companies, it was by far the biggest hit in memory.

ONE AFTERNOON, JADWIGA, who is very proud of Kraków, took us on a tour of some of the churches near the Rynek. We saw the Baroque Church of Ss. Peter and Paul, which is modeled on the Church of the Gesu in Rome; and, right next door to it, the fortress-like Church of St. Andrew, where a large number of Krakovians once holed up against a Tartar invasion, and were the only citizens to survive. (In a small, flower-filled chapel hangs an oil portrait of Kraków's Father Kolbe, a martyr of Auschwitz; the light of his beatification has been painted as a blurry halo behind his head.)

In the Monastery of the Missionaries, a banner of Vatican yellow billowed out from a black-framed photograph of Stefan Cardinal Wyszyński. A tall,

Punch-chinned young monk in a black soutane showed us around. The monastery garden smacked of a siege mentality: behind the magnolia bushes and the statue of Our Lady, plot after plot was planted in cabbage, and pigs wallowed in their pen. "Very good pigs," said the monk in English. He led us down a long hall, lined with portraits of seventeenth-century bishops, and into a handsome common room, with newspapers and soda water laid out on reading tables. The pride of the monastery hung on the wall: the famous 1583 full-length portrait of King Stefan Batory, who is shown as a towering figure in a red robe, with a roosterish face and cold glaring eyes, holding a handkerchief like Luciano Pavarotti.

"He was a good king," said the monk, with a knowing grin. "He had many good plans, but unfortunately he didn't succeed in all of them: one of them was fighting the Russians." (In a series of ruthless campaigns, and with the considerable aid of Transylvanian mercenaries, Batory managed to deprive the Muscovites of Livonia, their treasured "window on the West." However, he died without having accomplished his life's dream of conquering Moscow and crushing Ivan the Terrible. This was what the monk regretted.)

"Poles and Russians do not like each other, or, to be more exact, they harbor all sorts of uncomplimentary feelings, ranging from contempt to disgust and hatred, for one another." So says Miłosz in the "Russia" chapter of *Native Realm*. Poland's Russophobia is yet another legacy of the sixteenth century—when, according to Miłosz, the Polish language was "a symbol of elegance and refinement as far east as Polotsk or Kiev" and "the Muscovites, like the Tartars, were those barbarians on the peripheries against whom wars were waged, and no one was particularly interested in them." With their Renaissance culture, their liberties, their Catholic moral code, the Poles disdained the East.

But the barbarians did not, of course, stay on the peripheries. Poland was fated to be dominated by its wildly hostile neighbors: by Prussia and Russia in the eighteenth century, by these two plus Austria in the nineteenth, and then—thanks to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Treaty—by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. Yet even in the midst of these mortifying partitions, even while

hating Germany with a grim intensity, the Poles never ceased to see themselves as a Western nation defending civilization against the Eastern hordes. Defeat by the "barbaric" Russians hurt their pride as defeat by the "civilized" Germans never did. Even now, they continue to regard the Russians not only with the resentment of an oppressed people but with a sense of superiority that sometimes borders on ugliness. Usually, though, it takes a sly, humorous form—what might be called the Polish Polish joke. "A man goes into a restaurant and he sits down and orders a plate of Russian-style pirogi. The chef gets the order, and when he has finished cooking it, he shouts out, 'Who asked for the Russians?' A customer shouts back, 'Nobody asked for them, they just came.'" In a Kraków park where children get rides in a cart pulled by a St. Bernard and a donkey, people point at the donkey and say, "Russian mustang!"

I am not suggesting that Russian barbarity is merely a figment of Polish snobblism. On the contrary, it is a brutal fact of recent history, and for the Poles it is summed up in the word "Katyn." At the start of World War II, having occupied the eastern half of Poland as allies of the Nazis, the Russians deported hundreds of thousands of Poles to Soviet labor camps. But they selected out the leadership class for special treatment. In the spring of 1940, at least 4,500 officers, lawyers, and intellectuals were taken in groups of 300 to the Katyn Forest near Smolensk, shoved into a mass grave with their hands tied behind their backs, and shot, one by one, in the back of the head. As many as 10,000 others of the same class disappeared at the same time, and their bodies have never been found. The Russians have always claimed that the Germans committed this atrocity as they swept eastward, attacking Russia, in 1941. But the Soviet prosecutor at Nuremberg had a good reason for quietly dropping the case: the evidence, forensic and otherwise, overwhelmingly points to the conclusion that Katyn was a Russian operation, carried out in 1940, planned and ordered by the high-level authorities.

Five years later, the same Russians who had perpetrated Katyn came rolling back as "liberators" and proceeded to impose what was later known as the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP)



upon the Poles. "The whole country was bursting with suppressed hatred for its rulers and their Russian employers," Milosz wrote of this Stalinist postwar period. "The Normans after the conquest of England could not have been more isolated from the population than the new privileged caste. . . ." For no sooner was the Polish United Workers' Party entrenched than the Party bureaucracy set itself up as a new class, with its own shops, services, doctors, and summer resorts. The Party also brought in the apparatus of terror: deviationists were frequently purged, bishops and priests were arrested, and, just to make clear who was really in charge, a Soviet marshal was installed as commander-in-chief of the Polish armed forces. (For these and other facts, I am indebted to M. K. Dziewanowski's excellent *Poland in the 20th Century*.) The most popular subterranean joke of the period went like this: "Question: What is the best way of committing suicide? Answer: Simple—just jump into the gap separating the nation from the Party." With the exception of some comings and goings at the very top, this is the same party that ran Poland until the thoroughgoing reforms of this past July.

Even now, the ham-handed political decisions of the Stalinist era continue to ripple through daily life. For instance, in the late forties, the Party decided to build Nowa Huta, an instant steel town of 100,000. The Communists

could have placed this town almost anywhere, but they chose to raise it in the countryside just outside Kraków, with the explicit purpose (as one Polish historian has it) of creating "a strong socialist urban working class society" that would "influence the development of the social structure and social relations in an old and extraordinarily staid population. . . ." "Influence": in other words, the PUWP wanted to make sure that the liberal, traditional, Catholic, intellectual, royal, bourgeois city of Kraków could be statistically buried in any regional vote.

Now from any of Kraków's towers you can see Nowa Huta looming off to the east, with its smokestacks, high-rises, and perpetual leaden haze. Its factories burn a soft, sulfur-streaked Silesian coal whose emissions can only be described as infernal. To live in Kraków is to have a permanent sore throat; broken bones take an unusually long time to heal, and the rate of skin cancer is abnormally high. Monuments erected in the 1930s are already deeply pitted; ancient façades are being eaten away by the acid rain. One particularly noxious aluminum-oxide plant was recently shut down—a victory attributed variously to Solidarity or to the fledgling Kraków Ecological Club—but a general imposition of pollution controls seems unlikely. Thus, Nowa Huta continues to play Vesuvius to Kraków's Pompeii.

The Party sometimes interferes with people's lives far more directly. I am thinking of the graying taxi driver who took us back to Kraków from an outlying village one rainy afternoon. Liberated by the Americans from a German POW camp, he had come back home in an American uniform. This was enough to cause him to be thrown into jail for a year, he said, and to be ostracized by his fearful neighbors once he got out. He had been in jail other times as well—once for carrying a passenger whose suitcase happened to contain ten stolen hams. The driver got three months for "transporting a criminal," and the guards kicked him in the stomach and the teeth. Then another time—and this seemed to make him just as angry—a Communist official tore a picture of the Pope from the dashboard of the taxi and told him it was "silly."

"These people aren't human!" the driver finally exploded. "They're worse than animals!" Then he spoke more calmly: "But all this is finally changing.

It's changing this year." He flashed a hideous smile dotted with gold.

MULTIPLY THE TAXI driver's grievances times ten or twenty million and you begin to get an idea of the anger that has been building up in Poland for the past thirty-five years. Given this explodable head of wrath, how can one possibly account for the predominantly positive tone of the revolution in Poland, the overall absence of vindictiveness? "When a man accumulates the anger I have accumulated for so many years, he learns to manage it all right," Lech Walesa, the chairman of Solidarity, told the journalist Oriana Fallaci. "Which explains why I control so well the crowds and the strikes. . . . Listen, my rage has been stored up for so long that I could keep it in at least five more years." Walesa, then, believes that controlling one's anger is simply a matter of practice and discipline. But it is also a matter of hope. The Poles have always had the ideal of their Golden Age to aspire to, and the Church to encourage their aspirations. Too strong to be suppressed, the Church worked as a counterweight to the regime, checking its worst abuses. Moscow had no choice but to give the Polish Party some leeway.

Poland was the only satellite to procrastinate its way out of building a monument to Stalin; most of its farms never were collectivized; it had fewer forced-labor camps than elsewhere. The uprisings of 1956, 1968, 1970, and 1976 did not bring down nemesis, as in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, largely because the Party didn't make the mistake of joining the revolts. Instead, it temporized; first the army would shoot some protestors in the streets; then the Central Committee would panic, make expansive promises of renewal and reform, and promptly forget them once order had been restored.

This process, bloody and frustrating though it was, seems in retrospect to have been a good formula for progress. The mini-revolutions were a kind of rehearsal stage, where the workers and students could refine their techniques. The word-of-mouth reports from these scattered uprisings solidified popular resistance to the regime. And the Party ended up exhausting its credibility and its reservoir of excuses. Then, without anybody quite expecting it, the shipyard strike in Gdansk in the summer of

1980 ignited the angry feelings of the people and produced a unanimous surge of resistance against the regime. Walesa says that his own anger burst in August of 1980, "because the occasion was bigger than I could hope." But it was a joyful kind of anger, and the Poles are still caught up in the exhilaration of letting it out.

"You never would have seen that a year ago!" In Kraków, one hears this exclamation again and again. Jadwiga points to a young man walking down the street in a white T-shirt with blue lettering. "That says, 'Free the Political Prisoners,'" she says, laughing. "You never would have seen that a year ago!" The same goes for the anti-conscription poster in the Rynek that asks, "Would Jesus Accept a Draft Card?" A year ago one would not have seen collection bins bulging with contributions for workers who fell in protest marches. Nor this newspaper item: "A commemorative plaque will be placed on the spot where a 13-year-old boy was mortally shot during the Poznan riots of 1956. According to eyewitnesses, the youth was slain while holding a white and red banner retrieved from a woman who had just fallen from gun fire. . . ." All this freedom is causing a certain giddiness, an air of celebration. "A year ago, everybody used to hunch up over their radios to listen to Voice of America," says Jadwiga. "Now people put the radio in their front window and turn the volume all the way up."

But the freedom is not absolute. Every Pole carries within him some private mental boundary beyond which he assumes there is trouble. One evening, as the orange dusk was thickening, we came through a medieval archway, turned into a deserted street, and there, scrawled on the wall in glowing yellow chalk, was a single word: "KATYN!" Jadwiga drew a sharp breath and looked away.

"Does that mean what I think it does?" asked my wife.

"Later! The walls have ears!"

PERHAPS BETTER THAN anyone else, Maciej Szumowski knows the limits of Poland's freedom, because he is redefining them daily in the course of his job. Szumowski is editor of the *Gazeta Krakowska*, which has a press run of 280,000 and is considered the best paper in the country. The *Gazeta* costs one zloty at local newsstands, but it goes for

up to 300 zlotys (more than a day's pay for many Polish workers) on the black market in Warsaw—if you're lucky enough to find one.

The *Gazeta* occupies an office building in one of the newer parts of town. (On the second-floor landing, there is a stained-glass Virgin and Child with a vase of fresh daisies set before it.) Three of us were sitting at a long table in Szumowski's cluttered office—the third person being the assistant press attaché from the American Consulate, who had come along to interpret. Off to one side stood a heavy breakfront holding souvenir plates from the Balkans.

Szumowski looked like a sculptor: a long, deeply creased face; short, rumpled hair; a brown corduroy jacket; blue jeans with turned-up cuffs; scuffed shoes; dirt under his fingernails. Somewhat wearily, but with care, he gave me the highlights of his career. In 1969, he had made a TV documentary exploring the tensions that would eventually erupt into the riots of 1970. The highest-paid journalist in TV, he was abruptly shut off in the seventies, forbidden to write or produce; but eventually the local authorities in Kraków (base of the Party liberals) had rescued him by making him editor of the *Gazeta*.

"This proves that even before August, 1980, there were some honest people in the Party," he concluded. He had just returned from a meeting in Warsaw where representatives of the press had discussed their role with Party leaders such as First Secretary Stanislaw Kania and Politburo member Stefan Olszowski, a hard-liner on matters of press censorship. I asked what had happened.

"It was a dialogue," he said. "It's impossible for them to give us orders now. Our task is to construct unity not by uniformization but by finding a platform for different views. It's very difficult."

He lit a strong-smelling cigarette, a Popolarne, and went on. "The key to the present situation is that we have to democratize the Party without breaking off continuity. The Party was called the Polish United Workers' Party, and it always talked about the welfare of the people, but it never listened to the workers. This had to change.

"But this lesson of democracy is a hard one to learn, and people can become drunk on it. This may sound

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naive, but it seems to me that one of the principles of democracy is defense of the interests of the minority. A lot of people tend to forget that, because the opinion of the majority was ignored for so long. It's hard to convince people now that some of the old Party members deserve to remain."

I began to recognize in the style of the man sitting across from me, with his furrowed brow, the tone of the *Gazeta Krakowska*, which is that of a fair and slightly worried referee. An article on a student protest march ends on a minatory note: "This time no incidents or dangerous provocations occurred. But will luck always be favorable to organizers of subsequent manifestations?" Credit is given where due, as in a piece on labor talks: "At the beginning it was thought that Solidarity was only out for blood against those in power. The negotiations proved otherwise." It is as if a delicate balance between the forces of democracy and those of continuity has to be maintained at all times. Both the Party and Solidarity are potentially capable of good and evil, and the *Gazeta* will scrupulously keep score.

"This is a newspaper with a face," Szumowski stated emphatically. "It interprets the facts right away, it shows its attitude."

The paper produced its most famous story last March, when the Bydgoszcz police beat up a number of Solidarity activists. "There was the threat of a general strike over that incident, and the whole thing could have come to a tragic end," said Szumowski. "We were the only newspaper to give an objective account of the affair. We published three points of view side by side on the front page: the account of the state news agency, the account of the local union officials, and the account of our own investigative team. The other newspapers printed only the official versions, and the TV coverage was the most conservative of all. But, of course, Solidarity has its Telexes and foreign sources of information, so people knew exactly what had gone on. That's why it was so stupid on the part of the press to lie. Nobody believed them. And that's why we're winning—we're trying to follow the principles of true journalism."

I asked him if he was subject to censorship.

"Yes," he said, with a light shrug. "Everything has to be shown to the

authorities. If there are objections, I stay and argue. Sometimes I'm on the phone until four in the morning. The worst difficulties arise over our reports of Party meetings. But in the majority of cases I win. This is proved by the popularity of the paper."

Perhaps in the translating back and forth he got the idea that I disapproved of something in his methods, because a little later he said, with just the barest hint of reproach: "You know, a newspaper called the *Mercury* was already being published here in Kraków in the seventeenth century. The first rules of the profession were determined here, and we have a long-standing tradition of journalistic freedom. This is a European city, with European traditions."

IF THERE IS SOMETHING familiar in Szumowski's curious adversary dance with the government, it is probably the memory it calls up of the late Cardinal Wyszyński's subtle tactics. Wyszyński taught the Poles the unusual virtues they now display—their patience and flexibility, their willingness to advance one step at a time, and their knack for co-existing with the regime while extorting from it new rights and freedoms. By his example, he helped show the Poles how to resist the temptation of romantic martyrdom, of heroic elan, that had often led to their undoing. It is true that the Church may once have encouraged these qualities, but during the war and the years of Communist domination, the Church, like Wyszyński himself, suffered and grew. In his role of conciliator, the opponent of open and foolhardy revolt, Wyszyński more than once saved the regime, and in doing so he incidentally increased the power of the Church until the regime was helpless without it.

Under Wyszyński's primacy, the Church saw the rise of a new priesthood, better educated than the peasant priests of the pre-war period, and well prepared to offer an ideological alternative to communism. Harassed and persecuted by the government, they nevertheless managed to provide a large portion of the population with a grounding in democratic and humanistic values without which the Solidarity movement could never have taken root. It was because the Church was so instrumental in the revolution now taking place that I sought out one of Kraków's leading Catholic intellectuals.

IMET ANDRZEJ POTOCKI at Wierzynek's, the best restaurant in Kraków. He had just had lunch with the British ambassador, whose Daimler, parked outside in the Rynek, was attracting a large crowd. Potocki is a tall, stooped man with bushy eyebrows; his rumpled gray suit and wrinkled rep tie gave him a donnish air. By profession he is a translator of scientific books into English, and he spoke with a British accent.

We started by talking about his work for Solidarity. "I'm not of working-class origin," he said, and he glanced over to see if I got the joke. Potocki belongs to one of Poland's great noble families. The Potocki Palace stood a few hundred feet away (it now houses the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society). Everyone in Kraków knows his story. Not long after the Communist takeover, and only four weeks after his wedding, he set out for London in a van loaded with the family art collection. Arrested at the border, he spent eighteen months in jail, nine of them in solitary confinement, and emerged with tuberculosis. The art was displayed at a great exhibition, with the public invited in to gloat.

"I don't have any legal education," Potocki continued, "but I'm working twelve hours a day out at Nowa Huta, helping them draw up voting regulations for the Solidarity election. There's an old Polish saying: 'You don't need saints to make clay pots.'"

He showed me one of the posters he had just had printed up. "YOU DECIDE," the bold red letters said in Polish. Stamped across this in black was the word "NOWOSC."

"That means 'novelty, new product,'" said Potocki, chuckling. "You see, this election—with secret ballot and all—is quite a new product."

Potocki had become involved with Solidarity through his work in the Catholic Intellectual Clubs, of which there are now more than fifty throughout Poland. These clubs perform all sorts of social services (the collection of people's unused pills for shipment to indigent Africans, for example), but their specialty has been the presentation of public lectures on Polish history. "People knew if they came to those lectures, they would be told the truth," said Potocki. "Not the whole truth—that wasn't possible—but as much as we were allowed to tell them." The lec-

tures also provided a platform for the philosophical thesis of Cardinal Wojtyla that people are the subject of events, not objects to be manipulated. "This notion of historical subjectivity caught on so well that you often don't have to explain what you mean by the term anymore."

I had heard several Poles say that the changes in Poland were caused mainly by the economic crisis, and I asked Potocki what he thought of the idea. He dismissed it with a wave of the hand. "If our economic problems were entirely responsible for the current situation," he said, "we would have chaos, hunger riots, and maybe a need for intervention. Instead we have a movement toward democracy. And how do we feel this need for democracy? The Church, the only institution that has showed us true human values, showed us this. Liberals could discuss many things among themselves, but they were always cut off from the mass media. Only the Church has had the means to talk to the masses."

But why, I asked him, had the people's political consciousness come to fruition in 1980? Why hadn't Solidarity grown out of one of the earlier uprisings?

"Well, you see, after the war, what had been a small but well-organized working class was suddenly flooded by masses of peasants. That is one thing you have to say for the Communist Party—it offered these people tremendous opportunities. Here were people who had been living in 'smoke cottages' with a fire on the floor and no chimney, and suddenly they moved into the city and got flats with bathrooms, plumbing, and electricity—it was a great advance for them."

"One of the greatest stabilizing forces behind the regime, right into the early seventies, was this whole generation whose material ambitions had been so greatly satisfied. They had very little class consciousness and they were not capable of understanding that their interests were different from those of their employer—the state."

"But in 1970, with the riots in Gdansk, it became evident that a new working class was emerging. The new generation had an awareness of its own interests, and they were learning the principles of political struggle—the hard way. They learned that you don't win anything in the street. You win

when you withdraw to the factory and stop working. *When we stop, everything stops.* In a sense, what is happening today was then foreseeable."

"After the price protests in 1976, you began to see the 'democratic-opposition' intellectuals actively seeking an alliance with the workers. And the workers knew they needed the educated class. In that sense, this isn't a class struggle. It's a revolution that tries not to destroy things but to rebuild real values."

He proceeded to tell me how the Catholic Intellectual Clubs had got involved with Solidarity from the very first days in Gdansk; how members of the clubs were able to help by giving legal advice, or by organizing new union branches, or by editing the Solidarity publications; and he told me how the local Solidarity chapter had been organized in the clubs' Kraków office, an eighteenth-century room with a cloud-filled mural on the ceiling and a polychrome crucifix on the wall. He was a very entertaining and enthusiastic man, and I could have listened to him much longer, but he was anxious to get back to Nowa Huta, perhaps in the ambassador's waiting Daimler. For my last question, I chose an unanswerable one. I asked if he could give me any idea how deep the Catholic faith went in the nation as a whole.

He made a helpless gesture. "The official Church figures have it that 80 to 90 percent of the people are baptized in the Church," he said. "On the other hand, if you go according to actual church attendance, or the surveys that have been done on abortion or the Pill, the figure could be as low as 20 to 25 percent."

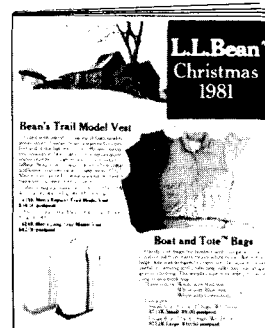
He pulled himself up. "Look. The depth of a people's faith is impossible to measure. When the Pope came and spoke in the square right out there, two million people came to hear him. An American satellite indicated two and a half million. I was there. It wasn't a crowd. It was an *assembly*. Two and a half million people were praying together. You can't measure that. The silence was such that you could hear birds singing in the sky. You could sense that two and a half million people were praying together and listening to the words of a prophet."

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Timothy Crouse is the author of *The Boys on the Bus*.

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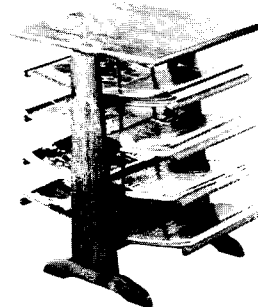
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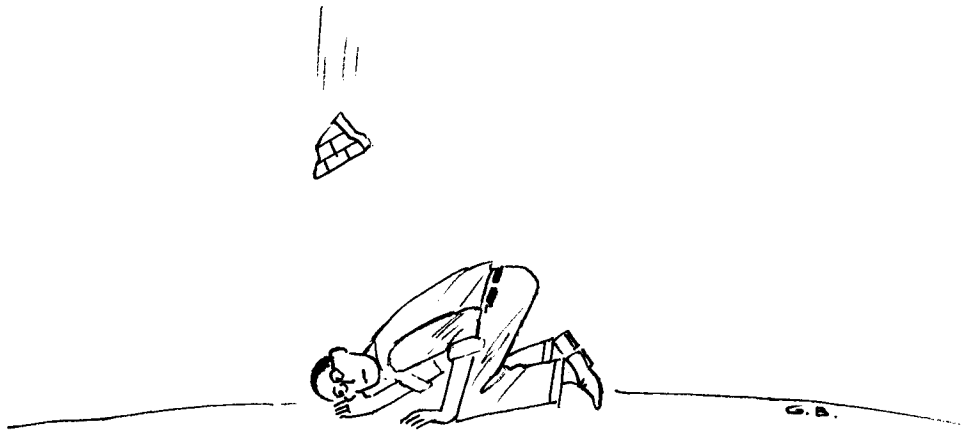
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*The question for southern California is not whether
there will be a disastrous earthquake but when it will happen*

LIVING ON THE FAULT LINE

BY JAMES FALLOWS



STANDING IN THE WASH OF THE SANTA ANA RIVER, YOU can see mountains all around you. The San Gabriel, the San Bernardino, and the San Jacinto mountains form a long, semicircular arc to the north and east, pierced by the passes that lead variously to such outposts on the California desert as Barstow, Indio, and Palm Springs. To the south and west are the lower hills that separate the San Bernardino Valley from the booming conurbations of Orange County and from Los Angeles itself, which lies seventy miles due west.

On those days, infrequent during summer, when opaque brown smog has not blown inland to fill the valley and lap over the rim of the mountains, the contours of the ranges are clearly visible from the valley floor. There is no natural obstruction to the view more substantial than the waist-high scrub. The sharp edges and escarpments of the mountains suggest their dramatic origin, as products of the pushes and pulls on the earth's surface that are even now creating mountain ranges in the West. The white gravel in the dry riverbed has been washed down from the mountains during the flash floods that from time to time strike this bone-dry region. The "river" runs with water for only a few days out of every year.

It can seem the bleakest of settings, especially when the Santa Ana winds blow down from the high deserts at temperatures well above 100 degrees. Yet, like many other harsh regions of the Southwest, this has been a scene of phenomenal growth. As people continue to move to

southern California, as Los Angeles has filled up, as real estate prices in Orange County have shot to the sky, many people have taken the next step in from the coast and have brought a population explosion to the "Inland Empire." The orange trees that line Interstate Highway 10 are the remnants of groves that were until the past two decades an economic mainstay of the region. They succumbed first to the smog and then to the subdividers. Some 400,000 people lived in the San Bernardino Valley in 1960. More than 700,000 live there now. There are plans for an "instant city" of 200,000 more people, to be built in the hills outside Chino, where the corners of San Bernardino, Orange, and Los Angeles counties touch.

People have moved to this valley seeking cheaper real estate, the good life in the sun, and the opportunities that economic growth creates. They are an hour's drive from the mountains, an hour from the ocean, and far, far away from such northern, urban cares as frost and economic decline. And their search has led them to the area that, according to many scientists, will be the site of the next catastrophic earthquake to strike the continental United States.

Those who live in the vicinity, as I did when I was growing up, are accustomed to earthquakes. Many pride themselves on surviving them, as those on the Gulf Coast might on surviving a hurricane. But the prospect that scientists now suggest is different from anything within living memory in southern California.

"We have known for years that major earthquakes in California are inevitable," says Clarence Allen, a geophysicist at the California Institute of Technology. "The scientific attitudes have not changed as much as the

*James Fallows is the author of the recently published book
National Defense.*

public perception that this is a real problem." But both scientific and public attitudes have been heavily shaped by two scientific developments of the past decade.

The first, which has been widely publicized since the early 1970s, is the evolution of the theory of plate tectonics. This theory postulates that the earth's crust consists of a number of large "plates," floating on a molten mass within the earth. There are seven of the larger plates—one bearing most of Africa and half of the Atlantic and Indian oceans, another holding virtually all of the European and Asian land mass—and a number of small ones. As the plates have drifted apart from, and into, each other, their motions have changed the world's geography. They opened the basin that became the North Atlantic Ocean, when the North American plate slid away from the Eurasian. They created the Himalayas, which mark the region where India was driven northward and collided with southern Asia. They stimulate volcanic action, including the recent eruptions at Mt. St. Helens. (As the small Juan de Fuca plate is pushed beneath the North American plate off the Washington and Oregon coasts, it melts at the tremendous temperatures and pressures of the earth's depths and then flows upward, in molten form, as lava.) The motion of the plates can also cleave regions from one another, as is now taking place in California.

The most famous of the "faults" that are responsible for California's earthquakes is the San Andreas—which, from the perspective of plate tectonics, is not just any fault but the boundary between two great plates. To the east of the fault lies the North American plate, which contains more than 99 percent of the land area of the nation, along with Canada, Mexico, and roughly half of the Atlantic Ocean. To the west of the fault is the Pacific plate, which runs beneath the ocean to the Mariana trench—where it disappears beneath the Philippine plate. The city of San Francisco is on the North American plate. Santa Cruz and Monterey, immediately to the south, are on the Pacific plate. So are Los Angeles, San Diego, and the other population centers of southern California.

Through the millennia, the two plates have been moving past each other along the San Andreas Fault, the Pacific regions slipping north, the North American south. The Baja California peninsula resembles in length and width an indentation on the western coast of Mexico. That is exactly where it came from, geologists say, before it moved north with the rest of the Pacific plate. The motion of these two plates goes on at rates as high as 5 or 6 centimeters a year—very fast, by geologic standards. Rocks on the Pacific side of the fault near Point Arena match those on the North American side at Taft, 350 miles to the south. The two regions abutted one another until the fault motion started about 25 million years ago. Ten million years from now, Los Angeles and San Francisco should lie in the same latitude.

For California, the significance of the tectonic theory was to explain the basic mechanism of earthquakes, not only on the San Andreas Fault but also on the many others that parallel it and the few that run at right angles to it. Year by year, the plates creep past each other; from time to time, rocks must yield. The largest recent earthquake in California, the 1906 "fire" (as civic boosters chose to call it at the time) in San Francisco, could be seen from the perspective of plate motion as the event through which the northern section of the San Andreas Fault released the strain that had been accumulating over the years.

IT TOOK A SECOND AND MORE LOCALIZED SCIENTIFIC development to add the note of certainty to forecasts that a catastrophic earthquake will strike southern California. The man most often identified with this development is Kerry Sieh, a geologist at Caltech. His contribution has been to estimate the schedule on which the rocks along the fault give way.

As the plates move past each other, the strain that accumulates at great depth can be accommodated in different ways. The plates can release some or all of the strain by "creeping" past each other with steady movement, or through numerous small earthquakes that human beings barely feel. Such creeping takes place along a section of the San Andreas Fault in central California, and it leads to novel effects, such as the fissure at a frequently photographed winery in Hollister that is gradually being split by the fault. Much of the tension along a fault line can also be relieved through less frequent quakes of "moderate" power, in the range of 5 or 6 on the Richter scale. Many of the subsidiary faults in California behave this way. Finally, the rocks on a fault line can lock solid. When this happens, there is no gradual distortion of roads, fences, or wineries, nor are the earthquakes frequent. The two sides of the fault remain motionless until the shearing force of the plates' movement overwhelms the strength of the rock itself. The result is a "great" earthquake, which releases enormous accumulated energy all at once and can result in one side of the fault moving as much as twenty feet past the other in the space of a few seconds or minutes. The San Francisco quake of 1906 was such a great earthquake, affecting the northern section of the San Andreas Fault. Another portion of the fault, which runs roughly 200 miles between a small town called Parkfield, in central California, and the San Bernardino Valley, and which is sometimes referred to as the southern section of the San Andreas and sometimes as the south central section, has been locked solid for more than a century. In 1857, during its last great earthquake, the sides of the fault moved past each other by as much as thirty feet. The southernmost section of the fault, which starts near San Bernardino and runs to the Salton Sea, has had no major

ruptures during "historic time"—geologists' term for the 200-plus years of written records for the region, as opposed to the eons of the rocks. Scientists' understanding of this portion of the fault is so incomplete that they are not sure whether it should be considered very likely or very unlikely to suffer a major earthquake in the foreseeable future.

Kerry Sieh's approach was to study the layers of earth at several places along the southern San Andreas Fault to see what they revealed about the timing of previous earthquakes. Through a variety of techniques, such as uncovering layers of peat moss that had been deformed by violent earth movements and then determining their age, he concluded that along the portion of the fault that ends north of San Bernardino, there was a pattern of dormant periods followed by strong earthquakes. Working from an early version of Sieh's findings, the Federal Emergency Management Agency issued the following warning last January as part of a report it prepared for the National Security Council on the consequences of a major earthquake in California:

"Geologists can demonstrate that at least eight major earthquakes have occurred [on the southern San Andreas] in the past 1200 years with an average spacing in time of 140 years, plus or minus 30 years. The last such event occurred in 1857. . . . geologists estimate that the probability for the recurrence of a similar earthquake is currently as large as 2 to 5 per cent per year and greater than 50 per cent in the next 30 years. . . . The aggregate probability for a catastrophic earthquake in the whole of California in the next three decades is well in excess of 50 per cent."

Kerry Sieh has recently reworked his estimates, allowing for greater uncertainty about the magnitude of previous quakes and for the imprecision of the carbon 14 dating process. "The best scientific guess would be that the average interval is somewhere between 125 and 225 years, with both of those being extremes," Sieh said recently. "My own intuitive best guess is that it's about 160 years, plus or minus 30. I'd say that there's a 50 percent chance of a great quake in the next four decades." Considering that the last great earthquake in southern California was 124 years ago, Sieh said at the end of one of his papers, "We are almost certainly not 'overdue' for a repeat of the great 1857 earthquake, but we are clearly well along in the process. We are much too far along, in fact, to neglect serious preparations for the eventuality."

THE REPEATED ALLUSION TO "GREAT" EARTHQUAKES is important, for it refers to a difference in magnitude so enormous as to become a difference in kind. "Great" quakes are generally understood to be those of magnitude 8 or above on the Richter scale. (Sometimes those of 7.75 magnitude are so classified.)

The last "great" quake in the continental United States was the one in San Francisco in 1906. Since then, Alaska has experienced a great quake, in 1964, and there have been devastating earthquakes in Chile, China, Japan, Italy, and elsewhere. But in California, the strongest earthquakes in the past seventy-five years have been in the 6 and 7 range on the Richter scale—and most of them have been centered in unpopulated areas. The most damaging of the quakes, though not the strongest in Richter terms, were the 1933 earthquake in Long Beach, magnitude 6.3, and the 1971 San Fernando quake, also a magnitude of 6.3. Within a matter of years, there will be no one alive in California with personal memory of the effects of a "great" quake there.

Without the testimony of survivors, it may be hard to imagine the consequences of a "great" earthquake. The difference between 6.3 and 8.3 on the Richter scale does not sound fundamental, but it is. Each increase of 1 on the Richter scale signifies an increase of thirty times the energy and ten times the deflection on seismic measuring devices. If the San Andreas Fault should produce an earthquake of magnitude 8.3, as many geologists expect, it would release about 900 times as much energy as did the San Fernando earthquake of 1971. (The greatest quake of modern times, which struck Chile in 1960, had a magnitude of 9.5.)

The effects of major earthquakes are more readily comprehensible when expressed in terms of ground shaking, on the "Modified Mercalli Scale." This is a measure of the effects of ground movement as they are felt in specific regions. The scale runs from I to XII. Level I is "Not felt except by a very few under especially favorable circumstances," and II is "Felt only by a few persons at rest, especially on upper floors of buildings." In a "great" quake, large areas may be subjected to the highest intensities of shaking, levels IX through XII:

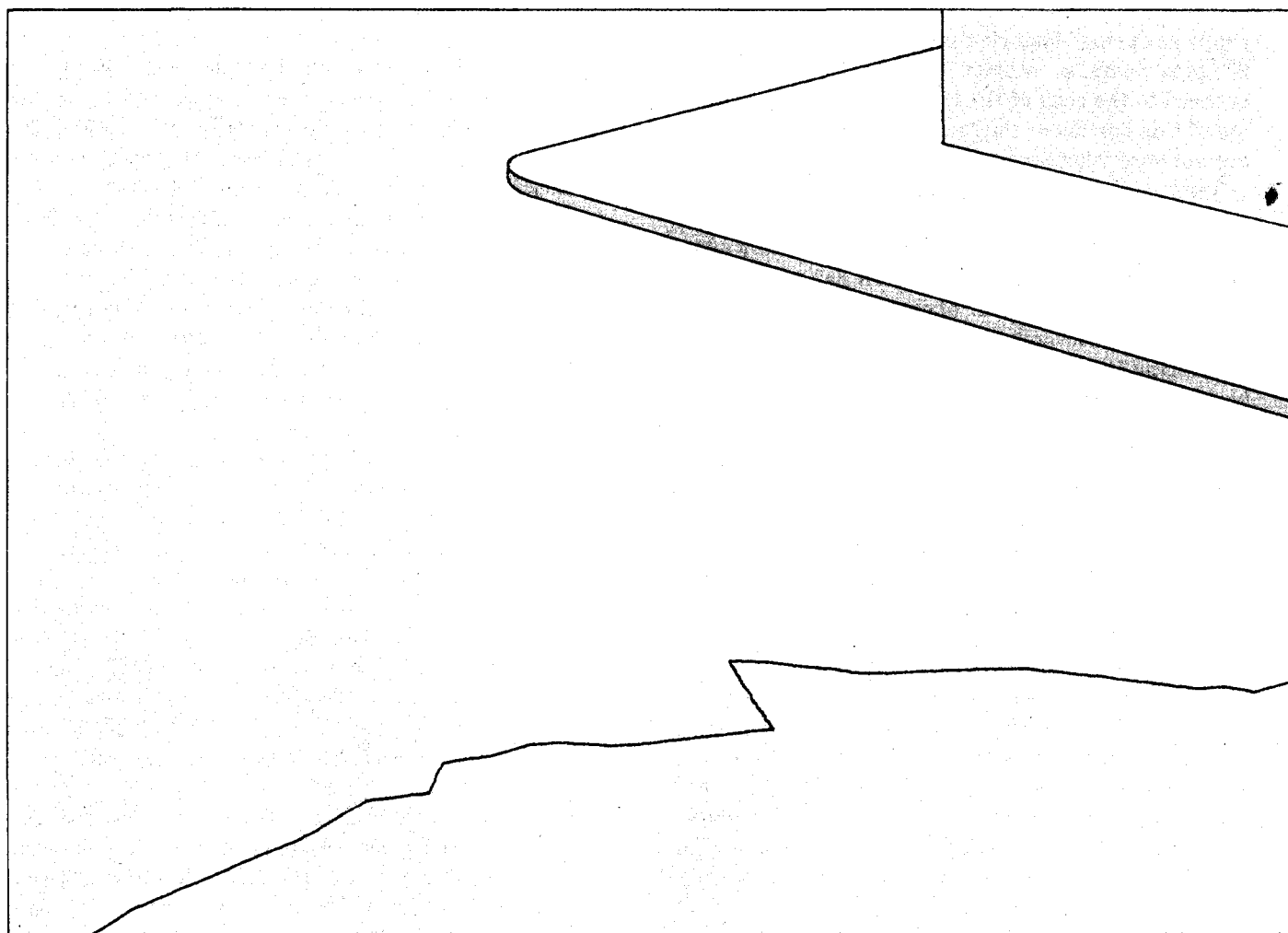
Level IX: Damage considerable in specially designed structures; well-designed frame structures thrown out of plumb; great in substantial buildings, with partial collapse. Buildings shifted off foundations. Ground cracked conspicuously. Underground pipes broken.

Level X: Some well-built wooden structures destroyed; most masonry and frame structures destroyed with foundations; ground badly cracked. Rails bent. Landslides considerable from river banks and steep slopes. Shifted sand and mud. Water splashed (slopped) over banks.

Level XI: Few, if any, (masonry) structures remain standing. Bridges destroyed. Broad fissures in ground. Underground pipelines completely out of service. Earth slumps and land slips in soft ground. Rails bent greatly.

Level XII: Damage total. Waves seen on ground surface. Lines of sight and level are destroyed. Objects thrown into the air.

In most versions of the Mercalli scale, levels IX to XII are grouped under the heading "Panic is general."



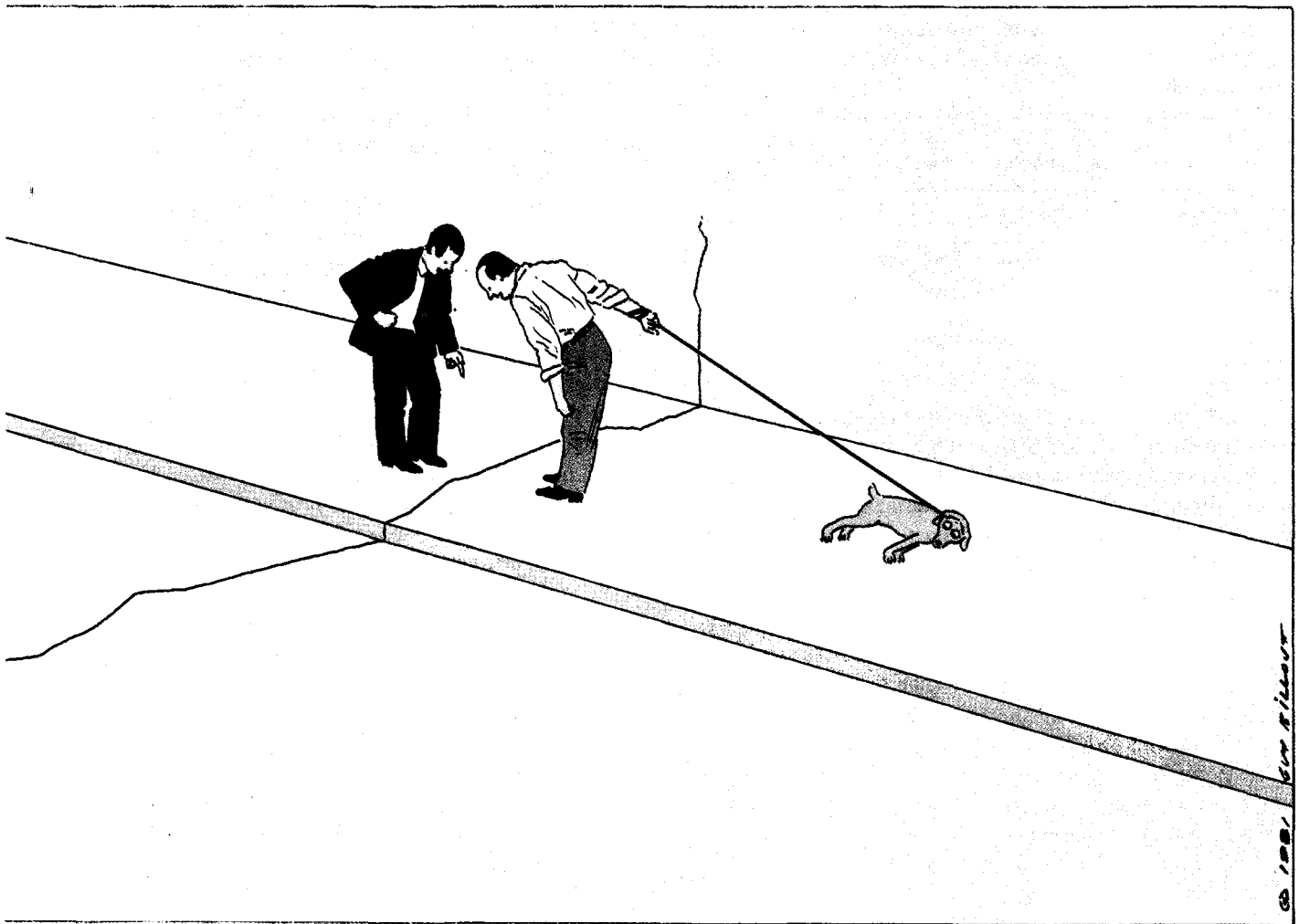
During the 1971 San Fernando earthquake, in which highway overpasses collapsed and forty-five people were killed when a Veterans Administration hospital fell down, there were shaking intensities of IX and perhaps even higher in some areas near the epicenter. The California Division of Mines and Geology has produced maps that display the predicted shaking intensities for a great quake on the southern San Andreas Fault. They show bands of IX intensity stretching for more than 100 miles, with levels of X to XII expected in sizable zones.

As the descriptions on the Mercalli scale may suggest, the main threat to human life during an earthquake comes not from the earth's movement itself but from things that fall. When severe quakes have occurred in out-of-the-way places, such as the 1872 earthquake in Owens Valley, they have rearranged the landscape but have taken comparatively few lives. That earthquake, centered in the stark region east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, was the strongest in California's history—its force was so great that within seconds it added ten to fifteen feet to the height of an escarpment and moved the sides of the fault twenty feet past each other—but only sixty people were killed. Unless people are trapped in the path of a landslide, hit by falling trees, or drowned

by the large ocean waves, called tsunamis, that earthquakes sometimes produce, they face little danger if they find themselves out in the open when an earthquake strikes.

The danger comes instead from buildings, especially those made of brick and other masonry, that are shaken to pieces during strong earthquakes and, in falling, cause most of the deaths. Some of the unreinforced brownstones of Manhattan, Federal townhouses in the Georgetown section of Washington, D.C., and mansions along Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, all so solidly built, could be converted to rubble in an earthquake, for their style of construction is generally the first to fail during strong quakes. Wood-frame houses, by contrast, are the most stable structures, since they are able to sway and absorb the earth's motion. Only under the most severe shaking intensities do one-story frame houses collapse.

The ability of different buildings to withstand shock is also greatly influenced by the ground on which they stand. The best place to be during a strong earthquake is on solid rock; the worst is on soft ground, mud, landfill, or areas with a high water table. Rock diminishes the intensity of the shaking; soft earth magnifies it. This



principle is not limited to California. If a strong earthquake were to hit Boston (which is a less remote possibility than it may seem, since Boston has historically been one of the more seismically active areas in the East), the houses of the Back Bay would be most severely shaken, because they are built on landfill. In 1906, the regions of San Francisco built on reclaimed land near the bay were far more heavily damaged than buildings on top of the city's rocky hills. The ultimate danger in such areas is liquefaction, caused by violent shaking that drives groundwater upward through the soil and thereby transforms it to quicksand. Heavy buildings, especially multi-story structures that are not anchored in bedrock, can tip over or sink into soil after it liquefies.

Through most of its southern section, the San Andreas Fault traverses dry plains and rocky canyons, where there are few buildings to destroy. But after it crosses through the San Bernardino Mountains at the Cajon Pass, it enters the inland valley that is now supporting such rapid growth, and it comes at its nearest point within about thirty-five miles of Los Angeles. It is the combination of the increasing probability of a quake, its expected magnitude, and its nearness to such a vast and wealthy human settlement that has created an atmo-

sphere of concern about an earthquake on the southern San Andreas. Two other possible earthquakes are on the list of concerns: a major quake on the northern San Andreas, which is thought to be less likely, since only seventy-five years have passed since the San Francisco earthquake, but which would affect an even more densely populated area and therefore might be more devastating; and a moderate earthquake on the Newport-Inglewood Fault, which runs directly through Los Angeles and was responsible for the Long Beach earthquake of 1933. Statistically, the latter is thought to be a longer shot than either of the others, but because it would affect Los Angeles directly, it might be the most damaging of all.

SHORTLY AFTER JIMMY CARTER TOOK A TOUR OF THE landscape of devastation around Mt. St. Helens, he grew concerned about the effects of a catastrophe in California and ordered a federal task force to prepare a report. Based on assumptions about how many people would be killed in different kinds of structures (for instance, 2 to 4 deaths per 10,000 population in wood-frame houses, 5,000 deaths per 10,000 in ordinary masonry buildings), the task force came up with the following

estimates of deaths and of injuries serious enough to require hospitalization. Some of the situations it considered were these:

Location		Southern San Andreas		Newport- Inglewood		Northern San Andreas	
Richter Magnitude		8.3		7.5		8.3	
Time		Dead	Injured	Dead	Injured	Dead	Injured
2:30 A.M.		3,000	12,000	4,000	18,000	3,000	12,000
2:00 P.M.		12,000	50,000	21,000	83,000	10,000	37,000
4:30 P.M.		14,000	55,000	23,000	91,000	11,000	44,000

In addition, there is, of course, the property damage. A consultant named Karl Steinbrugge, who was responsible for many of the most widely circulated damage estimates, predicted that the property damage could amount to some \$17 billion for the southern San Andreas, \$38 billion for the northern, and \$69 billion for the Newport-Inglewood. Because of the enormous uncertainties about both the quakes and the resistance of structures, Steinbrugge stressed that any of the estimates might be off by a factor of two or three—either high or low.

In 1973, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, known as NOAA, prepared two thick volumes to enumerate the likely effects of a major earthquake in Los Angeles and of one in San Francisco. The books contain page after page of maps, each one plotting the two major faults in northern and southern California and showing their location in relation to major facilities: hospitals, blood banks, reservoirs, railroads, airports, highways, military bases, aqueducts, natural-gas lines, electric generating stations and transmission lines, oil pipelines, and other facilities. The southern California report says, for example, that a major quake on the San Andreas could kill between 400 and 800 people who are already in hospitals and put 50 percent or more of hospital beds out of commission, at precisely the time that the demand for emergency service would be most intense. It also says that "in the event of an 8.3 magnitude shock on the San Andreas Fault, the failures of Fairmont and Bouquet Canyon dams should be assumed," and that such failures could kill more than 7,500 people and render 111,000 homeless; that all of the aqueducts that serve Los Angeles and San Bernardino cross the San Andreas Fault at least once and one of them crosses it four times, and that the region may be without its major water supplies for between two weeks and three months after a quake; that transportation, communications, finance, and all other essential services would be interrupted.

After reviewing these and other predictions, the Federal Emergency Management Agency concluded in its report earlier this year that "the Nation is essentially unprepared for the catastrophic earthquake (with a probability greater than 50 percent) that must be expected in California in the next three decades. . . .

Because of the large concentration of population and industry, the impacts of such an earthquake would surpass those of any natural disaster thus far experienced by the Nation. Indeed, the United States has not suffered any disaster of this magnitude on its own territory since the Civil War."

"What must be stressed is that this prospect presents us with an unprecedented problem in the history of the United States," Carl Ledbetter, a young mathematician who was briefly the director of the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project, said earlier this year in testimony before a congressional committee. "There has been no other time when the lives of as many as 69,000 people have been threatened at once; there has been no other time when losses on the order of magnitude of \$135 billion have been a real consideration; there has been no other time when the productive capacity of a region which generates one dollar in twelve of the country's Gross National Product has been under such a real and unavoidable threat.

"We do not know how to think about threats of this magnitude; they are unreasonable by all our past standards."

SOME SCIENTISTS SEEM TO FEEL THAT THEY DO KNOW how to think about such threats. They are concentrating on finding ways to predict when and where earthquakes will occur. From experience in the U.S. and more advanced work in the Soviet Union, Japan, and China, geologists have focused on several signs that usually appear from several months to several hours before large earthquakes occur.

One such sign is a pattern of small "foreshocks" that leads to a major shock. ("The problem is distinguishing between those and other patterns that *don't* turn out to be foreshocks, because no large earthquake follows them," says Karen McNally, another of Caltech's geophysicists.) The Chinese have associated the period before large earthquakes with changes in the nature and behavior of groundwater. The water level in wells sometimes changes just before a quake, and the water may contain different concentrations of radon gas. Both of these changes are apparently signs of rearrangements in the underground rock layers, which affect the courses through which the water must pass. Other scientists have constructed grids of geodetic markers on the earth's surface near a fault, on which they take repeated measurements to determine how much the earth's accumulated strain has distorted the grid.

There are even attempts under way to make scientific sense of the familiar folk-wisdom reports that animals can tell when an earthquake is coming on. In central California, near the San Andreas Fault, one researcher has built a number of burrows for field mice and monitored them to record the animals' activities. He will

attempt to establish the normal patterns and the variations from them for seasons and for feeding cycles—and then he will wait for the next big earthquake.

"We need more time—and we need more earthquakes," says Karen McNally. Few phrases are more frequently heard from the geologists and seismologists than "We'll learn a lot from the next big one." Such knowledge may be costly. Clarence Allen, in discussing events of the past year or two, says, "There's been a change in the seismic pattern [in southern California] that makes us more worried than we'd normally be. We know we're in an area and an era where a great earthquake would be no scientific surprise. We see a pattern of low activity for fifteen years or so—and now this change to higher activity, which makes us nervous." There are similar implications from the Palmdale Bulge, an area along the San Andreas Fault north of Los Angeles where the ground has apparently risen about a foot. "On the assumption that the bulge exists, as I would argue it does, it may be significant," Allen says. "Its shape is roughly coincident with the fault, and the very rapid rate of its rise—by geological standards—makes us think it might be trying to tell us something." But just what the bulge—or the changed seismic pattern, or the groundwater, or the animals—may be trying to say will be much clearer after the next big earthquake has confirmed or disproved the hypotheses.

In the meantime, of course, scientists are offering forecasts whose details of time and place may be imprecise but whose general point is hard to miss. But because the day of reckoning is so uncertain, and because the catastrophe is so strongly associated with divine judgment, against which the efforts of mortals are no defense, it has been hard for California and its public officials to decide what to do.

The things that could conceivably be done fall into two categories—mitigation and preparedness. Mitigation means taking steps before an earthquake to minimize the damage; preparedness means being ready to cope with the problems created by the earthquake.

Since earthquakes do most of their damage to buildings, the most obvious mitigating procedure is to strengthen buildings that might otherwise be destroyed. This California has tried to do, by passing new laws and tightening its building codes after each serious earthquake. When the 1933 Long Beach earthquake crushed masonry buildings throughout southern California, including a large number of schools, people realized that if the earthquake had occurred a few hours earlier, when school was in session, thousands of children might have been killed. The result was the Field Act, which set more stringent standards for school construction and, despite some delays in application, has made schools the safest public buildings in the state. During the 1971 San Fernando earthquake, the Van Norman Dam was so severely damaged that, according to most experts, it came within

a few seconds' shaking of failing altogether. If it had done so, the death toll from that earthquake might have increased by a factor of 100. Soon afterward, the state undertook a dam inspection program that has—theoretically—made its dams much safer than before. The improvement must so far be considered only theoretical, because neither the dams nor the skyscrapers that have sprung up in Los Angeles since the thirteen-story limit on construction was removed in 1956 have yet been subjected to the test of a major quake. Engineers have often found themselves chagrined by the results of previous quakes. In 1979, a 6.6 magnitude quake struck the Imperial Valley, an earthquake-prone region east of San Diego. The most serious single casualty was the Imperial County Services Building, a new six-story structure that had been advertised as incorporating the latest standards in earthquake-resistance but which was so severely damaged that it had to be demolished.

The major structural peril is the large stock of old (pre-1934), unreinforced masonry buildings. There are about 8,000 of them in the city of Los Angeles alone, and their inevitable destruction is expected to be responsible for 80 percent of the deaths and 75 percent of the injuries in a great earthquake. The buildings are located mainly in the crowded downtown areas of Los Angeles and in the less fashionable sections of San Bernardino and other cities. The population that lives and works in them is largely poor and non-white, which is why earthquakes—though they threaten Porsche and pickup alike when freeway bridges collapse—will probably end up killing a disproportionate number of poor people. The economic forces that have kept the old buildings from being reinforced or renovated during the previous fifty years also make the owners of the buildings unlikely to invest voluntarily in such reconstruction. Early this year, the Los Angeles City Council passed an ordinance requiring that all the old buildings be either greatly strengthened or razed.

While earthquake experts generally praise this step, they point out two catches: the deadline for renovation is a dozen years away and could be stretched out even further through legal maneuvering; and no one has figured out who should pay the bill. One school of thought contends that anyone who bought one of these buildings knew there was a hazard and has no right to complain because the gamble didn't work out. Others argue that strengthening the old buildings and reducing the potential disaster serves the public's interest and therefore deserves public financial support, through either tax incentives or low-cost loans. Still another group claims that trying to repair these structures before a quake will always be too costly to make sense. "You can't talk about a massive program of retrofitting old buildings," says Richard Andrews, the acting director of the Southern California Earthquakes Preparedness Project. "If you're talking about a building still under construction, making

it seismically resistant might add 5 to 7 percent to the cost. For those that are already built, it can add 100 percent." Instead of worrying about avoiding property damage, some earthquake authorities conclude, it makes better sense to assume that the scientists will provide some warning, and then to get people away from the buildings and out of harm's way when an earthquake is due.

In a more fundamental sense, mitigation includes not only the buildings but also the places where they are built. From this perspective, the population boom in northern San Bernardino County can be seen as a move in the wrong direction. The northern outskirts of San Bernardino and the surrounding small communities—Del Rosa, Highland, Patton, Devore—are dotted with tract homes and new condominium developments. This very region is the southern limit of the 200-mile ground rupture that can be expected if the next great earthquake follows the pattern of the one in 1857. The geological map shows that the San Andreas and several associated faults pass directly through the new developments.

SINCE 1972, CONSTRUCTION NEAR FAULT ZONES HAS BEEN controlled by California's Alquist-Priolo Act, which declares the areas near active faults to be "special study zones" and forbids construction intended for human occupancy within fifty feet of the trace (surface line) of an active fault. I visited one of the largest condominium developments north of San Bernardino, a place with several hundred units—adults-only apartments plus an adjoining mobile-home park. "You may have noticed some wide yards, some extra swaths of grass," Robert Rigney, the county administrative officer for San Bernardino County, later remarked. "Those represent the geologists' best guess about where the fault line runs." When I asked the saleswoman at the development whether there were any earthquake problems in the area, she said, "This is southern California, honey. This is earthquake country. You ever look at a fault map? There's no place you can go that's very far away from them, so my advice is just to forget about it."

Indeed, Robert Rigney says that nearness to the fault, as in the case of this development, could be a source of false alarm. "The fifty-foot limit was designed to protect structures from damage caused by ground ruptures," he says. "Once you've passed that point, proximity doesn't mean much. As for the shaking—well, the whole valley will have that." As Clarence Allen puts it, "In a truly great quake, once you're a few feet away from the rupture it doesn't make much difference whether you're there or five miles away."

Robert Rigney also raises a larger question: Should people be prohibited from doing something—like buying new houses near the fault line—that may well cause them harm? "The zoning laws are designed to protect

against injuries and deaths, especially in public buildings. They are *not* intended to protect property per se. If people choose to live here, that's their choice."

In a sense, he's right. The sociologists whose reports make up a larger and larger fraction of official publications about earthquakes have consistently pointed out that among all the possible responses to warnings of a quake, moving away from southern California is the public's last choice. "The Southern California public's *lack* of readiness is quite rational," a report from the Policy Research Center at the University of Redlands said early this year. "The threat is too uncertain in its impact and timing to command a high priority with people, especially since they face more pressing life demands which justify higher costs and yield higher immediate benefits. Just as people accept the risk of driving a car in order to gain the freedom it allows, many residents may also consider the earthquake threat an 'acceptable risk' in light of the benefits of living in Southern California."

The only thing wrong with the idea that people have knowingly accepted a risk is that many of them don't have the slightest idea what the risk really is. The most widespread source of misinformation is the notion that, since nearly everyone in California has lived through some earthquakes, they have a rough sense of what a big earthquake would be like. When I moved away from California in the late 1960s, I mocked the fears of my eastern friends about the effects of a quake. I'd been there; I knew what they could do. My confidence was eroded recently, when I discovered that during the period I lived there the strongest earthquake to strike southern California was 4.5 on the Richter scale—about a millionth as strong as the big one that is predicted.

GIVING PEOPLE MORE OF THE BASIC INFORMATION about faults, earthquakes, and hazards is a principal mission of one of the most hopeful new entries in the earthquake field, the Southern California Earthquake Preparedness Project. The project was launched as a cooperative effort of the federal government and the state. Its major purpose was to bring government officials, industrialists, and scientists together so that they could start figuring out who would do what to repair the damage done by the big earthquake. Who would fly in enough cash to keep the local economy running during the weeks it might take to reconstruct bank records lost when the computers go down? ("They tell us it will take ten days to get restarted for every one day the system's out," says Richard Andrews, of the project.) Who will run the morgues? Who will handle the insurance companies, if there is a prediction of a quake nine months from now and they start refusing to renew earthquake coverage?

The project has been hampered in its early stages by a messy disagreement between Robert Olson, who as director of California's Seismic Safety Commission has ad-

ministrative jurisdiction over the project, and Carl Ledbetter, the mathematician and academic administrator who, at the age of thirty-one, was hired as the project's first director in January of this year. In July, Ledbetter submitted his resignation after Olson had asked him to do so. Olson claims that the disagreement was purely one of personal tastes and administrative styles. Although Ledbetter himself does not say so, others feel that he had made some officials nervous, even envious, because of his very success in getting the press and the public to begin thinking of earthquakes as a serious threat.

The disagreement about the southern California project may have been largely a clash of personalities, but it rises above that to the extent that it illustrates the internal friction that has characterized many efforts to "do something" about earthquakes. Most of the public bodies that have wrestled with the earthquake problem seem to have proven more successful so far in accommodating their own professional and bureaucratic habits than in doing things that would make a significant difference if a great earthquake should strike, say, next month. For politicians, those habits include making gestures of concern. Thus, Governor Edmund Brown, Jr., has appointed a special task force to look into earthquakes; its findings are not notably different from the many reports that other task forces have written and filed over the years. For sociologists, earthquakes provide a reason for polls differentiating between "elite" and "mass" views on, for example, the credibility of earthquake warnings delivered through different news media. The "public policy" consultants have seen in earthquakes an opportunity for constructing elaborate flow charts and "decision trees" of phenomenal complexity, much as their professional brethren did fifteen years ago when laying plans for Model Cities and the Job Corps. Meanwhile, new houses spring up near the fault zone and old houses stand waiting to collapse.

There also seems to be a genial agreement among many of the participants that ignorance is bliss. If there is a constant in the political history of earthquakes in California, it is that responsible officials are often eager to promote the idea that it can't happen here. Arnold Meltsner, of the University of California, has pointed out that "the geological map of California published by the California State Mining Bureau in 1916 did not contain any indication of faults, not even the famous San Andreas"—and this ten years after the San Francisco earthquake. Representatives of Palmdale have done their best to have their bulge referred to instead as the "Southern California uplift." When officials of a county in southern California discuss what their role after an earthquake should be, they tend to emphasize what they will be doing to help repair the devastation

elsewhere, not what help they themselves will need.

Any non-Californian who is tempted to mock the desire to ignore earthquakes is invited to consider his own situation. While the government's seismic-risk maps show that most of California is in Zone 3, where "major destructive earthquakes may occur," that zone is not confined to California. It also includes parts of Utah and Idaho; the area along the Mississippi where Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky meet; the Charleston region in South Carolina; greater Boston; a strip along the Great Lakes; and the St. Lawrence Valley in upstate New York and northern Maine. For several months in the winter of 1811-1812, a powerful sequence of earthquakes occurred in New Madrid, Missouri. In 1886 there was another powerful earthquake in Charleston, South Carolina.

I asked Clarence Allen what caused those earthquakes. He said, "No one knows."

ON A SMOGGY SUMMER DAY WHEN THE TEMPERATURE was 99 degrees, Carl Ledbetter rode with me through the foothills north of San Bernardino where the San Andreas Fault runs. "If I remember the maps correctly, the fault goes right past this intersection," he said as we stopped at a crossroads. On one corner of the intersection was a mobile-home park.

"Mobile homes are tremendously vulnerable during earthquakes," Ledbetter said. "They suffer about six times as much damage as regular homes. All of these will be thrown off their supports. They'll all be gone." We drove up a steep hillside, where several dozen new single-family homes were ready for occupancy. "You see the grading on the terraces here? That will never hold. There will be landslides all down this hill."

We drove back down the hill, to the floor of the Santa Ana wash. Farther to the east, where the San Andreas Fault began to divide into two roughly parallel zones, there was a narrow, sharply defined ridge, of the sort that is sometimes created by fault action. Several modern, obviously expensive houses sat on top of the ridge. "I've got to bring my camera up here and take 'before' pictures of all these places," Ledbetter remarked. "Then I'll come back for the 'after.'"

"We could do something about it," he said, as we drove through the wash to Redlands. "Little things can make a big difference, like strapping down the water heater to ensure you'll have something to drink, or knowing how to turn off the gas lines and prevent a fire. Also big things, like thinking about land-use policies, and being prepared for a big earthquake's impact on the nation's economy and its military security. It's not impossible to protect ourselves. But we'd have to start doing it now." □



THE YEARS OF LYNDON JOHNSON

BY ROBERT A. CARO

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INTRODUCTION

TWO OF THE MEN LYING ON THE BLANKET THAT DAY in the autumn of 1940 were rich. The third was poor—so poor that he had only recently bought the first suit he had ever owned that fit correctly—and desperately anxious not to be: thirty-two-year-old Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson had recently been pleading with one of the men, George Brown, to find him a business in which he could make a little money. So when Brown, relaxing in the still-warm October sun at the luxurious Greenbrier Hotel in the mountains of West Virginia, heard the other man on the blanket, Charles Marsh, make his offer to Lyndon Johnson, he felt sure he knew what the answer would be.

Brown wasn't surprised by the offer. Marsh, a tall, imperious man of fifty-three, whose profile and arrogance reminded friends of a Roman emperor, was addicted to the grandiose gesture, particularly toward young men in whom he took a paternal interest. Only recently, Marsh, pleased with a reporter's work, had told him he deserved a "tip"—and had thereupon given him a newspaper company. Some years earlier, his sympathies having been engaged by the story of Sid Richardson, a young oil wildcatter reduced by a series of dry wells to pawning his hunting rifle for room and board, Marsh

had, in return for a share of future profits (profits he believed would never materialize), agreed to guarantee bank loans to enable the young man to continue drilling. And Marsh's feelings toward Johnson, whose control of his congressional district had been cemented by the enthusiastic support of Marsh's powerful Austin, Texas, newspaper, were particularly warm. "Charles loved Lyndon like a son," Brown says.

Brown wasn't even surprised by the size of the offer. A rich man himself by most standards, he knew how far from rich he was by Marsh's. The newspaper Marsh had so casually given away was only one of a dozen he owned; and he held—and collected interest on—the notes of a dozen more. In Austin alone, his possessions included the city's biggest newspaper, much of the stock in its biggest bank, all of the stock in its streetcar franchise, and vast tracts of its most valuable real estate. And newspapers, banks, streetcars, and real estate were just minor items on Marsh's balance sheet, for his partnership with Richardson was not his only venture in the fabulous oil fields of West Texas; forests of derricks pumped black gold out of the earth for his sole account. So Brown listened with interest but not astonishment when Marsh said he no longer got along with Richardson and he had

one inflexible rule: if he didn't like a partner, he got out of the partnership. This partnership, he said, hadn't cost him a dime, anyway—he had obtained his share in Richardson's wells just by guaranteeing those bank loans years before. He would sell his share to Johnson at a low price, he said, and, Brown recalls, he said, using a characteristic phrase: "I'll sell it to you in a way you can buy it." There was only one way for a young man without resources, and that was the way Marsh was proposing: as Brown listened, Marsh offered to let the young congressman buy his share in the Richardson enterprises without a down payment. "He told Lyndon he could pay for it out of his profits each year," Brown explains. The share was probably not worth a million dollars, says Brown, who had seen the partnership's balance sheets—but it was worth "close to" a million, "certainly three quarters of a million." Marsh was offering to make Lyndon Johnson rich, without Johnson's investing even a dollar of his own.

But if George Brown wasn't surprised by the offer, he was surprised by the response it received. Johnson, polite, ingratiating, and deferential as he always was with the older man, thanked Marsh. But, polite, ingratiating, and deferential as he was, he was also, Brown recalls, quite firm. He would like to think the offer over, he said, but he felt almost certain he was going to have to decline. I can't be an oilman, he said. If the public knew I had oil interests, it would kill me politically.

All that week, Lyndon Johnson considered the offer—in a setting that emphasized what he would be giving up if he declined it: the Greenbrier, with its immense, colon-naded Main House rearing up, gleaming white, in the midst of 6,500 acres of lush, manicured lawns and serene gardens; its vast, marble-floored ballroom, in which guests danced under cut-glass chandeliers; its Spring House, surmounted by a bronze Hebe, cupbearer to the gods, around which, every afternoon, cold champagne was served at canopied tables; its arcade lined with expensive shops; its fleet of limousines, which brought arriving guests from the nearby station, at which their private railroad cars were lined up in a long row; its battalions of green-liveried servants, was, as *Holiday* magazine put it, "opulent America at its richest"—the distillation of all that was available in the United States to the wealthy, and not to others. As the three men lay every morning on their blanket, which had been spread on a slope in front of their accommodations—a row of white cottages, set away from the main building for privacy, which were the resort's most expensive—the mountain slopes before them were turning, day by day, into the glorious shades of an Allegheny autumn, like a show presented for their private enjoyment. Day after day, Johnson discussed the offer with Brown, telling him details of his life he had often told him before: about the terrible poverty of his youth, about his struggle to go to college, and about the fact that, after three years in Congress,

three years, moreover, in which he had accumulated, thanks to President Roosevelt's friendship, far more than three years' worth of power, he still had nothing—not a thousand dollars, he said—in the bank. Again and again, he told Brown about his fear (a fear that, Brown believed, tormented him) of ending up like his father, who had also been an elected official—six times elected to the Texas State Legislature—but had died penniless. He talked repeatedly about his realization that a seat in Congress, with its inadequate salary and no pension, was not a hedge against that fate; so many times since he had come to Washington, he said, he had seen former congressmen, men who had once sat in the great chamber as he was sitting now, working in poorly paid or humiliating jobs. Again and again, he harked back to one particular incident he could not get out of his mind: while riding an elevator in the Capitol one day, he had struck up a conversation with the elevator operator, who had said that *he* had once been a congressman too. He didn't want to end up an elevator operator, he said. Accepting Marsh's offer would free him from such fears forever, he knew. But, again and again, Johnson would return to the statement he had made when Marsh had first made the offer: It would kill me politically.

George Brown had been working closely with Johnson for three years; Johnson's initial nomination to Congress, in 1937, had, in fact, been the result of an immensely complicated transaction with a very simple central point: the firm in which Brown and his brother, Herman, were the principals—Brown & Root, Inc.—was building a dam near Austin under an arrangement with the federal government that was of dubious legality, and needed a congressman who could get the arrangement legalized. Johnson had succeeded in doing so, and the Browns had made a million dollars from the new federal contract. Ever since, Johnson had been trying to make them more, an effort that had recently been climaxed by the award to Brown & Root of the contract for a gigantic naval base at Corpus Christi; this contract would make the Browns not one million but many. Having worked with Johnson so long, Brown felt he knew the young congressman and understood how anxious he was to obtain money. He had a feeling, moreover, that this anxiety was intensifying, a feeling nurtured not only by the increased intensity of Johnson's pleas that Brown find him a business of his own but by a story circulating among Johnson's intimates. Several months before, Johnson had introduced two men to each other at an Austin party, and one had later bought a piece of Austin real estate from the other. The seller, a local businessman, had been astonished when the congressman approached him one evening and asked for a "finder's fee" for the role he had played in the transaction. Telling Johnson that he hadn't played any role beyond the social introduction, he had refused to give him a fee, and had considered the matter closed; the transaction, he recalls, was small, and the finder's fee

would not have amounted to "more than a thousand dollars, if that." When, therefore, he opened the front door of his home at 6:30 the next morning to pick up the newspaper that had been dropped on his lawn, he was astonished to see his congressman sitting on the curb, waiting to ask him again for the money. And when he again explained to him that he wasn't entitled to a fee, he recalls, "Lyndon started—well, really, to beg me for it—and when I refused, I thought he was going to cry." Brown, knowing how anxious Johnson had been for a thousand dollars, was surprised to hear him hesitate over three quarters of a million.

He was surprised also by the reason Johnson had advanced for his hesitation. *It would kill me politically*—what "politically" was Johnson talking about? Until that week at the Greenbrier, Brown had thought he had measured Johnson's political ambition—had considered the measuring simple, in fact, for Johnson talked so incessantly about what he wanted out of politics. He was always saying that he wanted to stay in Congress until a Senate seat opened up, and then run for the Senate. Well, his congressional district was absolutely safe. Being an oilman couldn't hurt him there. And when he ran for the Senate, he would be running in Texas, and being an oilman wouldn't hurt him in Texas. For what office, then, would Johnson be "killed" by being an oilman?

Only when he asked himself that question, George Brown recalls—only during that week at the Greenbrier—did he finally realize, after three years of intimate association with Lyndon Johnson, what Johnson really wanted.

And only when, at the end of that week, Johnson firmly refused Marsh's offer did Brown realize how much Johnson wanted it.

GEORGE BROWN, WHO HAD THOUGHT HE KNEW LYNDON Johnson so well, realized during that week at the Greenbrier that he didn't know him at all. Their lives would be entwined for thirty more years: as Brown & Root became, with Johnson's help, an industrial colossus, one of the largest construction companies—and shipbuilding companies and oil-equipment companies—in the world, holder of Johnson-arranged government contracts and receiver of Johnson-arranged government favors amounting to billions of dollars, suave George Brown and his fierce brother Herman became the principal financiers of Johnson's rise to national power. But at the end of those thirty years—on the day Lyndon Johnson died—George Brown still felt that to some extent he didn't really know Lyndon Johnson at all.

No one knew him. Enlisting all his energy and all his cunning in a lifelong attempt—the details of which are in themselves a remarkable story—to obscure the facts of his personal life, his rise to power, and his use of power, he succeeded so well that no one saw him whole: not his

wife, who, contrary to the carefully contrived legend, was until the last decade of his life kept largely in the dark about his political and financial activities; not his mother, who had a mother's unique understanding of his complex personality but who saw her son infrequently after he reached manhood; not his "intimates," for no intimate was permitted to see more than a fraction of the man or his maneuvers; not the citizenry of the nation he led as President, the citizenry that gave him his full term as its leader by what was then the greatest voting majority in history. No one. He rose to the leadership of the nation's Senate, held the leadership for five years, and during those years exercised more power in the Senate than any other man in the nation's history—enough so that he was called, during those years, "the second most powerful man in Washington"—and was the subject of a thousand newspaper and magazine articles, and no one knew him. He came to the presidency and remained in it for five years, during which he was perhaps the most powerful man on earth, and, despite newspapers and magazines and television, still no one knew him. In a nation whose Constitution provided, in the words of an earlier President, Abraham Lincoln, that "no one man should hold the power of bringing the nation into war," this one man brought the nation into war—escalating a limited involvement into a war that drained its treasurehouses, and soaked up the blood of hundreds of thousands of its young men; into a war that not only cost it more money than World War II but also lasted longer; into a war abroad that caused civil disobedience verging on civil insurrection at home—and the nation did not know that man. He attempted to make that nation a Great Society—with education acts, and civil-rights acts, and anti-poverty acts, and Model Cities acts, and a hundred other laws that constituted the most sweeping attempt at social reform since the New Deal—and the nation did not know the man who was doing that, either. If, during the long evolution from a "constitutional" to an "imperial" presidency, there was a single administration in which the balance tipped decisively from one to the other, it was the presidency of Lyndon Johnson. It was during his presidency also that there began the widespread mistrust of the President that was symbolized by the phrase, coined during his administration, "credibility gap." Both these developments, which were to affect the nation's history profoundly, were to a considerable extent a function of the personality of the man—but the nation did not know the man.

THIS LACK OF KNOWLEDGE WAS NOT DUE TO LACK OF curiosity. Indeed, during Lyndon Johnson's presidency, there was in Washington what one columnist termed an "obsession" with his personality. ("Under Kennedy," a columnist's wife said, the main topic of Washington dinner-table conversation was ideas; "now it

is Lyndon Johnson's personality.") Rather, the lack of knowledge was due to an aspect of that personality with which Washington had become familiar: Lyndon Johnson's preoccupation with and talent for secrecy. This talent was striking even in his youth, and in the concealment of his own life story the President had outdone himself. His years at college are one illustration—one among very many—of his efforts at concealment, and of their success. While still an undergraduate at Southwest Texas State Teachers College, in San Marcos, he arranged to have excised (literally cut out) from hundreds of copies of the college yearbook certain pages that gave clues to his years there (luckily for history, some copies escaped the scissors). Issues of the college newspaper that chronicle certain crucial episodes in his college career are missing from the college library. A ruthless use thereafter of political power in San Marcos made faculty members and classmates reluctant to discuss those aspects of his career.

As a result, although twenty-one previous biographies have been written about Lyndon Johnson, not one has mentioned certain facts about his college years that should at least be considered in assessing his character and personality: that, for example, Lyndon Johnson, who won a seat in the United States Senate in a stolen election in 1948, stole his first election in 1930, to give himself a seat on his college's senior council. No previous biography has mentioned that if he stole one election at college, he won another by the use, against a young woman guilty of a single, insignificant indiscretion, of what his lieutenants call "blackmail"; that a score of political tricks on the same moral level earned him a reputation on campus as a man who was not "straight," not honest; that he was, in fact, so deeply and widely mistrusted at college that his nickname, the nickname he bore during all his years at college, the nickname by which he was identified in the college yearbook, was "Bull" (for "Bullshit") Johnson. (The yearbook, in terms far harsher than those employed about any other student, also mentions his "sophistry," and calls him "a master of the gentle art of spoofing the general public.") Most significant, perhaps, no biography has mentioned that the dislike and mistrust extended beyond politics: no biography of Lyndon Johnson, who as President was accused of lying to the American people, has mentioned that some of his fellow students (who used his nickname to his face: "Hiya, Bull"; "Howya doin', Bull?") believed not only that he lied to them—lied to them constantly, lied about big matters and small, lied so incessantly that he was, in a widely used phrase, "the biggest liar on campus"—but also that some psychological element *impelled* him to lie, made him, in one classmate's words, "a man who just could not tell the truth."

But if in San Marcos he was regarded with mistrust, in another little town in Texas, during these same years,

Lyndon Johnson was regarded as "a blessing, a blessing from a clear sky."

The town was Cotulla, a tiny, predominantly Mexican community of tin-roofed shacks broiling under the fierce sun on the vast, desolate plains of the South Texas brush country. Having been forced to drop out of college for lack of funds, Johnson spent a year there teaching in the town's Mexican school.

He got the job because no one else would take it, and Cotulla had never had a teacher like him. No teacher had ever cared if the Mexican children learned anything or not; this teacher cared. He battled the school board to get them equipment so that they could play games at recess like the white kids, and insisted that they, too, have baseball games and track meets with other schools. And he taught—taught with a furious energy, coming to school very early and staying very late, inspiring his thirty-two pupils with the promise that if they learned, success would surely be theirs, spanking them if they didn't do their homework. His pupils didn't resent the spanking, because they felt that the emotion behind it was concern for their future—and they were right; for the rest of his life, Lyndon Johnson would remember lying in his room before daylight and hearing motors, and realizing that his pupils wouldn't be in school that day because they were being "hailed off in a truck to a beet patch or a cotton patch" to earn a few dollars instead. And he didn't teach only children. The school's Mexican janitor didn't speak English; Johnson bought him a textbook and tutored him on the steps of the school with endless patience as the loafers across the street sat laughing at them. Hints of the Great Society as well as of the credibility gap can be found in Lyndon Johnson's youth.

Before San Marcos and Cotulla was Johnson City, a town in the Texas Hill Country, one of the most remote and impoverished areas in the United States. In Johnson City, a town so isolated its inhabitants felt it was an island surrounded by an ocean of empty land, Lyndon Johnson spent a childhood in which he was held in contempt, not so much because of his personality (although the determination to manipulate and dominate was already vividly apparent, and aroused resentment) but because he was a member of a despised family. He spent a childhood in which, often, the only food in his house was the food that neighbors brought out of charity, a childhood in which he had to wonder, from month to month, if the mortgage payments would be met and his family would still have a home to live in; a childhood in which the parents of the girl he wanted to marry refused him permission to date her because he was "a Johnson," and as he stood in the courthouse square with his cousins in the evenings, he had to watch her drive around with another man. Before San Marcos and Cotulla, also, was California. Trying to escape a life of brutally hard physical labor wresting a living from an infertile soil, Lyndon

Johnson ran away to California to become a lawyer, but the attempt came to nothing, and he found himself back in Johnson City working on a road-building gang, in effect working in harness with a mule, the two of them forcing a scoop through the rocky Hill Country soil. He emerged from his childhood—broke out of Johnson City—desperate for respect and security, so desperate that for the rest of his life all considerations fell before the demands of ambition.

IS PURSUIT OF WEALTH WAS ONE EXAMPLE.

If at the Greenbrier Johnson subordinated his desire for money to his desire to become President of the United States, he found, not long thereafter, a way to reconcile the two ambitions—and in years to come he found a dozen ways: twenty-three years after he had lain poor on the Greenbrier blanket, he entered the Oval Office the richest man ever to occupy it. By the time he assumed the presidency, *Life* magazine estimated his fortune at \$14 million; Johnson's representatives protested publicly that that estimate was far too high; privately, some now admit that it was far too low.

Attainment of the presidency did not slake his thirst for money. Upon assuming the office, he announced that he was immediately placing all his business affairs in a "blind trust," of whose activities, he said, he would not even be informed. In truth, however, the establishment of the trust was virtually simultaneous with the installation in the Oval Office of private telephone lines to certain Texas attorneys associated with the administration of the trust—and over those lines, during the entire five years of his presidency, Johnson personally directed his business affairs, down to the most minute details, not infrequently working on those affairs, according to some of his attorneys, for several hours a day. Johnson's business could be conducted even during affairs of state. For example, during a visit to the Johnson Ranch by German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, the President sat behind closed doors browbeating a group of businessmen in connection with a television option agreement—an agreement he had won through his behind-the-scenes influence over the Austin City Council, which he had earlier manipulated like a ward boss. In his direction of his business affairs, he did not hesitate to use the power of the presidency itself, and to use it with utter ruthlessness. And during his presidency, Lyndon Johnson piled atop the millions of dollars he had already made millions more.

More significant than the dollar total of Lyndon Johnson's fortune were the methods he employed to accumulate it—for a detailed examination of such methods is an instructive lesson in the means by which, in twentieth-century America, a position of public power can be used to accumulate private wealth. But although dedicated investigative journalists produced from time to time

scattered articles detailing one or another episode in that accumulation, these episodes were never pulled together to show an overall pattern, in part because of Johnson's talent for secrecy; for example, the telephone setup was arranged so that those business-related calls would not be handled by a White House operator or appear in White House telephone logs. The one aspect of his accumulation of wealth that was explored in any depth at all was the Johnson radio and television interests, which were in his wife's name. There existed a vague public awareness that Johnson had somehow employed political pressure to force the Federal Communications Commission to grant concessions to his small Austin radio station and to the Austin television station that he later added to it. There were jokes—bitter in Austin, knowing in Washington—about the fact that for fifteen years the capital of Texas had to make do with a single television channel. But the extent of the pressure and of the concessions was seldom detailed; little public understanding existed of the fact that the FCC not only created the Johnson broadcasting monopoly and protected it against incursion but steadily expanded its sphere until it was a radio-television empire that, far from being limited to Austin, or even to Texas, eventually spread over cities in three states. This empire, which had grown from a radio station that the Johnsons bought on Christmas Day of 1942 for \$17,500, was by the time he entered the presidency worth \$7 million—and was producing profits of \$10,000 a week.

The growth of the radio-television empire was, in fact, one of the less sordid episodes in the story of his accumulation of wealth. Never explored in sufficient detail was the economic fate of those men who, owning their own television stations (or banks, or ranches), tried to compete with Lyndon Johnson, or simply to hold on, against his wishes, to their property—men who were broken financially on the wheel of his power. And Lyndon Johnson left the presidency, and lived out his life, and died, with the American people still ignorant not only of the dimensions of his greed but of its intensity.

IF, HOWEVER, JOHNSON THREW HIMSELF INTO THE PURSUIT of wealth with a furious, frenzied, almost desperate energy, that energy characterized his work in other areas, as well.

His election to Congress came when he was only twenty-eight years old, but as a result of it the land in which he had been raised was transformed. When he went to Congress, in 1937, the Hill Country had only recently obtained its first paved roads, and had not yet obtained electricity; its families worked their impoverished farms by the same methods by which they had been worked a hundred years before. If he went to Congress to get a dam built and make its backers rich, before he left Congress he got a half-dozen dams built—and he also suc-

ceeded, in the face of difficulties almost unimaginable to residents of more highly developed areas, in using the dams to provide electricity to the lonely ranches of the Hill Country. When he realized that he had to teach the people of the Hill Country how to use electricity—that it meant more than just light bulbs hanging from the ceiling—he taught them to use it, and he taught them soil conservation and crop rotation, and other methods of easing a harsh round of life that had gone uneased since the first settlers came to that country, in 1836. During his first years as a congressman, he obtained for his congressional district, a district in which county budgets were figured in tens of thousands of dollars, \$70 million—for the biggest rural electrification cooperative in the United States, for roads, for schools, for federally insured mortgages to save his people's farms, for federal loans to help his people's children go to college. Johnson's effort to bring the people of his region into the twentieth century is as much the bright side of democracy as other aspects of his career are the dark side of democracy.

THE STORY OF LYNDON JOHNSON'S RISE TO POLITICAL power sheds light on economic forces that had immense impact on the nation.

Two incidents are particularly significant in this story. One occurred in 1944, the other in 1948. In the 1944 incident, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, after a conference in the Oval Office with Johnson and the President's vice-roy for Texas—a shrewd, silent country lawyer named Alvin J. Wirtz, who was Johnson's political godfather—personally intervened with the Internal Revenue Service to quash an investigation into Brown & Root's financing of the career of the young congressman who would one day sit in Roosevelt's chair. In the 1948 incident, President Harry S. Truman, was whistlestopping through Texas. Aboard his campaign train were the local dignitaries who could be expected to be aboard—among them the governor of Texas and two of the state's congressmen, House Speaker Sam Rayburn and Lyndon Johnson—and one whose presence was entirely unexpected: George Parr, the “Duke of Duval.” Parr, who ruled sun-baked, cracked-clay Duval County and a half-dozen others stretching down to the Mexican border with gangs of armed *pistoleros*, wanted certain assurances from the President himself in connection with his gift to Lyndon Johnson of the votes that had elected him to the Senate and placed him finally on the path to the presidency. The notorious Parr was not the type of figure a President would want on a train ridden by the national press corps, but Johnson and Rayburn had insisted that Truman see Parr, and the border-county dictator was not only on the President's train but in the President's compartment, closeted with him in private conference—and receiving the assurances he wanted.

Both these incidents occurred because of a President's realization of the importance, in an era in which money increasingly was becoming the basic fuel of politics, of coming to terms with new economic forces. Minor though they are, therefore, they are convenient benchmarks of the rise of these forces. The impact on America's politics, its governmental institutions, its foreign and domestic policy, of these new economic forces that surged out of the Southwest in the middle of the twentieth century has not been adequately explored by historians. America has had its great books on the robber barons of the nineteenth century and on the impact on the nation of the economic forces they represented. The great books on the robber barons of the twentieth century—the oil and sulfur and gas and defense barons of the Southwest—have yet to be written. And they should be written. As the robber barons of the last century looted the nation's land of its wealth—its coal and coke, its oil and ore, its iron, its forests—and used part of that wealth to ensure that the government would not force them to return more than a pittance of their loot to the nation's people, so the robber barons of this century have drained the earth of the Southwest of its riches and have used those riches to armor themselves against government.

Lyndon Johnson was not the architect of this control, but he was its embodiment and its instrument—its most effective instrument. It was these new economic forces—the oil, gas, sulfur, defense, space, and other new industries of the Southwest—that raised him to power and, once he was in power, helped him to extend it. For years, men came into Lyndon Johnson's office and handed him envelopes stuffed with cash. They didn't stop coming even when the office in which he sat was the office of the Vice President of the United States. Fifty thousand dollars (in hundred-dollar bills in sealed envelopes) was what one lobbyist—for *one* oil company—testified that he brought to Johnson's office during his term as Vice President. They placed at his disposal sums of money whose dimensions were revolutionary in politics, and he used it to bend other politicians to his will. From the day, before the 1940 election, on which, still a young, unknown congressman from a remote region of Texas, he went to President Roosevelt and asked for a political role with national power—and told the President that he would bring with him to the national campaign, to be dispensed to Democratic congressional candidates, huge donations from Charles Marsh and George Brown (and from their friends, the newly rich Texas oilmen)—he played an increasingly prominent role in the financing of the careers of other legislators. Congressmen and senators worried about money to ensure their return to Capitol Hill learned that all the money they needed was available from Texas—from Texas and from the new industrial order of the Southwest, of which Texas was the heart—and that Lyndon Johnson, more than any other single figure, controlled it. This money was the basic

source of his power on Capitol Hill. Lyndon Johnson was described as a legislative genius, a reader of men, a leader of men—thousands of articles described how he could grasp men's lapels, peer into their eyes, and talk them around, of how he could create consensus out of disparity.

Lyndon Johnson *was* a legislative genius, a reader of men, and a leader of men, but his genius would have had far less impact without the money to back it up, without

the knowledge on the part of the legislator being approached that the man grasping his lapel had the power to help his political career or—by aiding his opponent, instead—to end it. The “Johnson Treatment”—his blend of threats and pleading, of curses and cajolery—became a staple of the national political folklore. But these picturesque elements of the Johnson Treatment were only tassels on the bludgeon of power.

Caro devotes several hundred pages to describing the factors in the formation of Johnson's personality—his family's poverty, his early need to “be somebody,” his mother's idealism, his father's crushing financial failure as a farmer in the Texas Hill Country. The Atlantic takes up the narrative at a point at which Johnson has been debate coach for a year in a Houston high school and then, as a result of some precocious volunteer work he has done for Welly Hopkins, a Texas state senator—work that led Hopkins to say that Johnson was “gifted with a very unusual ability”—has gone to Washington as secretary to Richard Kleberg, the new Democratic congressman from Texas's Fourteenth District.

THE PATH TO POWER

HE LIVED IN THE BASEMENT OF A SHABBY LITTLE hotel, in a tiny cubicle across whose ceiling ran bare steam pipes, and whose slit of a window stared out, across a narrow alley, at the weather-stained red-brick wall of another hotel. Leaving his room early in the morning, he would turn left down the alley, onto a street that ran between the red-brick walls of other shabby hotels. But when he turned the corner at the end of that street, suddenly before him, atop a long, gentle hill, would be not brick but marble—a great shadowy mass of marble, marble columns and marble arches and marble parapets, and a long marble balustrade high against the sky. Veering along a path to the left, he would come up Capitol Hill, and around the corner of the Capitol, and the marble of the eastern facade, which would already have caught the early morning sun, would be a gleaming, brilliant, almost dazzling white. A new line of columns—towering columns, marble for magnificence and Corinthian for grace—stretched ahead of him, a line, broken only by the pilasters that are the echo of columns, so long that columns seemed to be marching endlessly before him, the acanthus leaves of their mighty capitals hunched under the weight of massive entablatures, the long friezes above them crowded with heroic figures. And columns loomed not only before him but above him; there were columns atop columns, columns in the sky, for the huge dome that rose above the Capitol was circled by columns not only in its first mighty upward thrust, where it was rimmed by thirty-six great pillars (for the thirty-six states that the Union had comprised when the Capitol was built), but also high above, 300 feet above the ground at its climax, where, just below the statue

of Freedom, a circle of thirteen smaller, more slender shafts (for the thirteen original states) made the *tholos*, a structure modeled after the place where the Greeks left sacrifices to the gods, look like a little temple in the sky, adding a grace note to a structure as majestic and imposing as the power of the sovereign state that it had been designed to symbolize. And as Lyndon Johnson came up Capitol Hill in the morning, he would be running.

At first, because it was winter and she knew that he owned only a thin topcoat and that his only suits were lightweight tropicals suitable for Houston, Estelle Harbin, the woman who worked with him—and who, coming to work in the morning, sometimes saw the gangling figure running, awkwardly, arms out and flapping, in front of the long rows of columns on his way to the House Office Building, beyond the Capitol—thought he was running because he was cold. “We weren’t used to weather like they had in Washington,” Miss Harbin recalls, “and Lyndon couldn’t afford any warm clothes. When I would get to the office, his cheeks would still be all rosy.” But even in spring, after the weather turned warm, whenever she saw Lyndon Johnson coming up Capitol Hill, he would be running.

THE DAY LYNDON JOHNSON FIRST ENTERED THE Capitol—December 7, 1931, the opening session of the Seventy-second Congress—was the day on which the first order of business was the election of a new Speaker of the House of Representatives. After the election, as the House rose in applause (applause mingled with Indian war whoops and the Rebel yell), a committee

escorted to the triple-tiered white marble rostrum—on the topmost tier of which there stood, above the crowding and turmoil of the House, a single, high-backed chair—a short, red-faced man with fierce white eyebrows, dressed in a cheap, rumpled brown suit and a rancher's heavy, blunt-toed brogans: John Nance Garner, "Cactus Jack" Garner—Garner of Texas.

Later that day, the great standing committees of the House met to select their chairmen. For twelve years, these chairmen had been Republicans; under Coolidge prosperity and Hoover prosperity, Democratic rolls had dwindled until one Democratic congressman muttered, "We're going the way of the Whigs." The Crash had changed the situation; the election of Lyndon Johnson's new boss, in fact, had sealed the change. The 1930 congressional elections had reduced the Republican majority in the House from 104 to two. By October of 1931, special elections to fill the seats of representatives who had died had given the Democrats their first majority in the House since 1919. But the majority was only two, and with two seats still vacant and a third held by a member of the Farmer-Laborite Party, three votes were uncertain, and the Democrats could not be sure they would be able to organize the House when it reconvened in December. Then, on November 6, 1931, Harry Wurzbach, the only Republican congressman from Texas, died. It was the election of Richard Kleberg, a Democrat, in Wurzbach's district, on November 24, that gave the Democrats a majority of 218 to 214 and assured them of enough votes to control the House. Within the parties, seniority determined chairmanships, and Democratic Texas had for years been sending congressmen to Washington and keeping them there. After the standing committees met on December 7, the chairman of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce was Garner's right-hand man, Samuel Taliaferro Rayburn—Rayburn of Texas. The chairman of the Rivers and Harbors Committee, overseer and dispenser of funds for the nation's great public works, was Joseph Jefferson Mansfield—Mansfield of Texas. The chairman of the Judiciary Committee was Hatton W. Sumners of Texas, of the Agriculture Committee Marvin Jones of Texas, of the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds Fritz Lanham of Texas. Texans were elected on December 7, 1931, not only to the Speakership of the House but to the chairmanships of five of its most influential committees. Lyndon Johnson's first day in the Capitol was the day Texas came to power in it—a power that the state was to hold, with only the briefest interruptions, for more than thirty years.

But the coming to power of Texas had nothing to do with Lyndon Johnson then. His congressman had no power; in a body in which power was determined almost solely by seniority, his congressman, the last one elected, had the least seniority of any of its 435 members.

His congressman, moreover, cared very little about being a congressman. Richard Mifflin Kleberg was one of

the wealthiest men in Texas, owner of a full 20 percent of the colossal King Ranch, which had been founded by his grandfather, Richard King, and expanded by his father, King's son-in-law, Robert Kleberg, into a 2,000-square-mile empire—a domain so large that automobiles crossing it had to carry compasses to navigate and there was a full month's difference in seasons between its southern and northern boundaries. Extending the ranch's influence beyond its borders, founding colleges and banks, building railroads, harbors, whole towns, in fact, Robert Kleberg turned much of South Texas into "Kleberg Country." And when, in 1922, Kleberg suffered a stroke, his son, Dick, then thirty-six, was put in charge of the empire's affairs.

But Dick displayed little interest in his inheritance. During his youth, he had loved to play polo and golf (he was one of the best golfers in Texas) and to spend his time outdoors; he was renowned even among the King Ranch's hundreds of hard-riding Mexican *vaqueros* as a great rider, a great roper, a great marksman. In his forties, he still bulldogged steers in rodeos, sat up all night drinking and playing poker, and, accompanying himself on the accordion, singing Mexican songs to the adoring *vaqueros*, who called him "Mr. Dick"; he still vacationed in Mexico City for weeks at a time. He was an easygoing, affable, considerate man. "A sweeter man than Dick Kleberg never lived," a friend says. "But he was a playboy. As for work, he had no interest in that *whatsoever*." He let the affairs of the great ranch slide until, almost unbelievably, it was in financial difficulties, and the trustees replaced him with his younger brother (who soon had it back on sound footing). Dick didn't seem to mind; business, he said, was not for him.

Neither, it turned out, was politics. His views on government were strong, if a trifle simplistic. The cause of the Depression, he felt, was Al Capone. "The trouble with the nation's economy," he declared, was simply Prohibition, which "makes it possible for large-scale dealers in illicit liquor to amass tremendous amounts of currency"; the "present economic crisis," he explained, was caused by the "withdrawal of billions of dollars from the channels of legitimate trade" by these bootleggers. His passions were also aroused by Herbert Hoover—not because, as some felt, Hoover was not doing enough to fight the Depression but because he was doing too much. Kleberg's first speech in the House, in January of 1932, urged Congress to begin "whittling down . . . government interference in business and society and the expenses of maintaining these interfering agencies." Not long thereafter, he sharpened his attacks, calling Hoover's policies "un-American," because of their "enormous expense." He had had, however, no desire to enter politics. He had become a candidate as a favor to a friend: the legendary Roy Miller, the one-time "Boy Mayor of Corpus Christi," whose lobbying activities for the gigantic Texas Gulf Sulphur Corporation were making his pearl-gray Borsalino and

silvery mane as familiar in Washington as they had been in Austin. Miller was a Garner ally; when Wurzbach died, the paramount qualification necessary, in Miller's view, for the Democratic nominee in the Fourteenth District was electability—since his election would give the Democrats the previously Republican seat, and with it the vote that would ensure Garner's election to the Speakership—and in Kleberg Country who was more electable than a Kleberg?

Kleberg won easily. But campaigning was the extent of his interest in his new job. At Lyndon Johnson's request, Kleberg had, on their first day in Washington, taken his secretary around to introduce him to his influential friends, but had done little thereafter to help him with his work. The House convened at noon; most congressmen spent mornings in their offices handling their districts' "casework"—individual requests from constituents—either taking care of it themselves or calling bureaucrats to tell them that their secretaries would be calling, thereby smoothing the secretaries' way. (Secretaries were the equivalent of today's administrative assistants.) Kleberg, however, spent his mornings sleeping off the previous evening's poker-and-bourbon session and his afternoons indulging his passion for golf at Washington's famous Burning Tree Golf Club. On his trips to Capitol Hill, his first stop would be the House cloakroom—not his office, in which the work bored him. Kleberg had given Miller *carte blanche*: permission to use his office—Room 258—as if it were his own. The lobbyist "was in there every day," says one congressional secretary, dictating letters (not only letters Miller signed with his own name but letters he signed with Kleberg's) and telephoning. Kleberg seldom appeared in Room 258¹ before the House adjourned in the late afternoon—when he would show up to welcome friends, his own and Miller's, dropping by for a drink. On many days, he never showed up at all. Room 258 was a congressman's office without a congressman. The work of the Fourteenth District was left to the congressman's secretary.

IN SOME DISTRICTS, THIS MIGHT NOT HAVE MATTERED much. With air travel still in its infancy, distances insulated congressmen—and their secretaries—from their constituents, few of whom came to Washington to be greeted, entertained, and taken on tours of the capital. Because the national government touched the lives of its citizens only occasionally, there was little communication between them and the representatives who were their link to it; the office of a congressman representing a typical western district might receive only ten or fifteen letters a day, most of them from job-hunters or from veterans needing assistance to obtain or increase govern-

¹ Offices in the House Office Building, later renamed the Cannon Building, have been renumbered. Kleberg's office is the room—now unnumbered—next to the present Room 244.





LYNDON BAINES JOHNSON

ment pensions. Many congressmen therefore employed only one secretary, often an elderly spinster who had spent a lifetime working for one or another congressman and was notably slow-moving in the performance of her duties. Life was leisurely on Capitol Hill. The House Office Building (there was only one House Office Building then, the one now known as the Cannon Building, and each congressman's office consisted of a single room) was a place of open doors; in the late afternoon, congressmen and secretaries would drop in on each other, desk drawers would be opened, and bottles would be pulled out for a friendly drink.

But Texas's Fourteenth was not a typical district. Included in its half-million residents (twice as many as in the average Texas district) was one of the nation's largest concentrations of servicemen and veterans, the constituents who made the most demands on a congressman—for San Antonio was the site of Fort Sam Houston, the nation's largest Army post, and the center of a ring of military aviation fields, including Kelly Field, Brooks Field, and Randolph Field, the "West Point of the Air." Tens of thousands of men had trained in the city (31,000 at Kelly Field alone during World War I), and enough had made their homes there after their enlistments were

up to ensure that the district's congressional office would have an outsize share of mail about pensions, disability benefits, and the new issue that was agitating ex-service-men in 1931: prepayment of their bonuses for World War I service. Kleberg's predecessor had been ill for more than a year, and his office had fallen behind in its work even before his death; when Lyndon Johnson opened the door to Room 258 for the first time, gray bags bulging with months' accumulation of mail were heaped before him.

And the new congressman's new secretary didn't know the district. Its northern end was Johnson's native Hill Country, but from the southernmost ridge of the familiar hills, the district stretched more than 200 miles farther south, to the great half-moon shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico.

Johnson didn't know the problems of this district—not of teeming San Antonio, not of gracious Corpus Christi and humming Port Aransas, the district's two port cities, not of the farmers and ranchers in the little towns he had passed in between. He had never even *heard* of some of those towns. He didn't know the problems—and he didn't know the people. As Johnson opened the mailbags, there spilled out on his desk requests to the congressman for postmasterships and assistant postmasterships and rural-route mail-delivery assignments, for jobs with the federal government in Washington, for appointments to West Point and the Naval Academy, for help in obtaining contracts to supply food or to pave roads at Fort Sam Houston or Kelly Field. The new secretary didn't know the names signed to the letters or mentioned in them, much less the names' political significance. There were scores of jobs to be filled; he had no idea who should be getting them.

And he didn't know Washington.

The hundred new congressmen who had come to Washington in December of 1931, had brought with them a hundred new secretaries, but few were less sophisticated than twenty-three-year-old Lyndon Johnson. When Estelle Harbin, a twenty-eight-year-old secretary from Corpus Christi who had been hired to assist Johnson, met him for the first time, in January of 1932, she saw "a tall, real thin boy" with huge ears, an outsize nose, dark eyes, dramatically white skin, and coal-black hair, who couldn't stop talking about the wonders of train travel; he asked her excitedly, "Have you ever ridden in a Pullman? I never did until I went up with Mr. Kleberg. Have you ever eaten in a dining car? I never did." When Johnson received his first monthly paycheck, he told Miss Harbin that he wanted to deposit it in a bank but that he didn't know how to open a bank account; he had never had one. And as for the intricacies of government, "That," says Miss Harbin, "was a whole new world to us." The mailbags contained letters from officials of farm cooperatives asking for the congressman's endorsement of an application for a loan from the Division of Coopera-

tive Marketing of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, or for assistance from the Department of Agriculture's Federal Farm Board, and hundreds of letters from veterans asking assistance with a complicated pension or disability problem. There were mailbags full of requests requiring action from some federal agency or department or bureau. Johnson didn't even know *which* agency or department or bureau. And when, after a day or two of fruitless telephoning, he decided to go to the Veterans Bureau in person, he found himself standing in front of a building a block square and ten stories high, each floor filled with hundreds of offices.

"We didn't know which bureau to go to, to ask about something, or to try to get something done," Estelle Harbin recalls. "We didn't know you could get books from the Library of Congress—and, my God, we never even *thought* of asking them for information. My God, we didn't know *anything*! The first time we heard that there was a little train that senators could ride [from the Senate Office Building] to the Capitol—well, we just couldn't believe *that*! Lyndon didn't know how to type, and he didn't know how to dictate a letter—he had never dictated one. We were two ignorant little children." Kleberg gave them his two complimentary House Gallery tickets to President Hoover's address to a joint session of Congress, but when they arrived, all the seats had been taken, and they sat, Miss Harbin recalls "on the two top steps," not saying a word. "Lyndon was there beside me as scared as I was. We sat there like two scared field mice."

Johnson could not persuade his boss to read the mail, much less to dictate replies. If he asked the congressman to call a government bureau on behalf of a constituent, Kleberg would always agree—but he never seemed to get around to doing it. When he asked Kleberg to call an official so that he, Johnson, would have an easier time dealing with him, that call never seemed to be made either. Johnson realized that he would have to handle the mail himself. And three times each day, another bundle would arrive. Years later, Johnson would recall: "I felt I was going to be buried."

Johnson was, however, living in the right place to get the information he needed about how to get things done in Washington's bureaucratic maze.

Once, the Grace Dodge Hotel had been a "ladies' hotel," with its name in Old English gilt lettering above its door, the most elegant of the cluster of eight-story red-brick hotels near Union Station, at the foot of Capitol Hill. With the Depression emptying its rooms, however, its management had decided to cater also to young men whose paychecks were small but, coming from the government, regular. The two basement floors were divided into cubicles and rented out—at forty dollars a month for rooms on the "A" floor, which was just one level down from the lobby and had bathrooms that had to be shared only with the tenant of the adjoining room, and thirty dollars for the smaller rooms on the bottom, or "B," floor,

where a single communal bathroom served all rooms and, since this level was partly below ground, the only daylight came from half-windows, high up on the walls, facing on a back alley. Most of the basement tenants were, like Lyndon Johnson (who lived on "B"), young congressional aides whose offices were right up Capitol Hill, and because many of them had several years' experience, they had expertise in the subject Johnson was interested in: how to get things done in Washington.

Since they couldn't afford to eat in the Dodge dining room, the young men walked out the hotel's back door into the alley, and down to the All States Cafeteria, which was decorated with plaques of state seals, on Massachusetts Avenue, for a meal that southern secretaries called the "Fo-bitter," because it cost fifty cents. A lot of joking and horseplay went on among the young men standing in line for their food, but Johnson didn't wait in line. After walking over to the cafeteria with the other secretaries, he would, as they entered the cafeteria door, dart ahead, grab a tray, select his food quickly, and then hurry to the large table where they would all be sitting and wolf down his meal. And he wolfed down information just as greedily. One of the older secretaries in the group, Arthur Perry, a Capitol Hill veteran, saw that Johnson rushed through his food because he wanted to be done with it before the others got to the table—so that eating wouldn't interfere with his conversation. "That left him free to shoot questions at us while we ate," Perry would recall.

The questions were all on a single theme: how to get things done in Washington, how to get ahead in Washington, how to *be somebody* in Washington. "He'd say, 'But how did he do it?' (Whatever it was.) 'Did he know somebody? Is he a nice guy? What's his secret of getting ahead?'" The simple answer—the shallow answer—didn't satisfy him. If one of the other men at the table replied, "I don't know as he has any special secret . . . Maybe he's just lucky," Johnson would say, "I don't believe in luck. You look into it and you'll find it's always a lot more than just luck."

ONCE JOHNSON KNEW HOW TO DO THINGS IN WASHINGTON, he started doing them, with the same frenzied energy he had displayed in Cotulla and Houston—the energy of a man fleeing from something dreadful.

Estelle Harbin, accustomed to the early rising ways of Texas, would arrive at the House Office Building before eight o'clock, saying good morning to the guard at the desk inside the New Jersey Avenue entrance, and then turning down the corridor to her right. The corridor, which was silent, for congressional offices didn't open until nine, was longer than a football field, so long that the light from the window at its far end reached only a little way toward her, and so high that the lighted globes on its ceiling did little to dispel its dimness; the tall,



RICHARD KLEBERG

closed office doors between which she marched, her heels rapping sharply on the marble floor, stood like sentries in the gloom. When she reached the far end, she would turn left into another corridor, unwindowed and even darker—except that, halfway down, from the twelfth door on the right, a single shaft of light would always be falling across it, from the open door of Room 258.

Often, Johnson would be writing when she walked into 258. Because of his difficulty giving dictation, he wrote out the letters he wanted Miss Harbin to type, writing and rewriting them until he was satisfied—and he wanted to finish with that work before eight o'clock, because at eight the dollies carrying the new day's mail began clattering down those long corridors. "The minute the mail arrived, we would start opening it together, and decide what to do about it," Miss Harbin says. "Then I'd start the letters he had written out before I got there, and he would get on the phone."

He knew whom to call now—and he knew how to talk to the people he was calling. "He had charm to burn," Miss Harbin says. "He would get someone to do something for him, and then he would hang up, and we would laugh about it. Very soon he had a real pipeline to all the bureaus. And he wouldn't take no—he would pursue these things like it was life and death. And when he got something for somebody—when we could write and tell somebody that they could look forward to getting some-

thing—that was a real victory. He'd put down the phone—'Stelle! Yay!' He'd just practically jump up and down."

Work not only began unusually early in Room 258—other secretaries say that no matter how early they arrived, the light in 258 was always on—but ended unusually late, often too late for Miss Harbin to return to her boardinghouse for dinner. Generally, the Kleberg office staff would dine at Childs' Cafeteria. "Lyndon knew the price of every dish in that restaurant," she says, "and a lot of times, we had to put our money on the table and count it to see what we could afford to order. We'd do this in the office [before leaving]. He'd say, 'This is Wednesday, and on Wednesday they have' so-and-so.'"

Soon an unusually heavy stream of letters "telling somebody that they could look forward to getting something" was pouring out of Room 258. But repetition did not dull the thrill Johnson received from each "victory." And it didn't dull the edge of his effort. When spring came, Miss Harbin would sometimes persuade him to take a brief stroll on the Capitol grounds. But although the stroll might begin at a relaxed pace, inevitably, Miss Harbin recalls, she would have to start trotting—because her companion would walk faster and faster. "He was so tall and he took such long steps, and I couldn't keep up with him. I would say something, and he'd slow down, but soon he'd be going faster again. I'd skip to keep up with him, and then I'd have to run." And when they turned back to the office, he would begin striding faster and faster, "and then he would take my hand, and we'd run, literally run, across the Capitol grounds. He just couldn't wait to get back to that office."

If he no longer had time to eat dinner with the Dodge boys, he was still a participant in their late-evening bull sessions—but the tone of his participation had changed with striking rapidity. Coming in late from work, he would walk into a discussion in one of the crowded little basement cubicles and begin at once to dominate it. He didn't want to talk about anything but politics, and steered every conversation onto that subject. And while he had been asking questions at the Dodge only a week or two before, now he wasn't asking anymore, he was telling—talking with the attitude of someone who knew all the answers. "We used to have discussions," one of the participants says. "Now we were having lectures—lectures by Lyndon."

His demeanor had changed elsewhere, too. In January, he and Estelle Harbin had sat on the steps of the Gallery of the House of Representatives like "two scared field mice" during President Hoover's address to Congress. In February, the President addressed Congress again. Several congressional secretaries who were sitting in the Gallery remember Johnson coming in late and pushing aggressively to get to an empty seat. Reaching it, he began introducing himself to everyone around him, in

a very loud voice. One secretary, who was sitting in a front row of the Gallery, remembers the people around him hunching down a little in embarrassment and says that he had done so too—when he felt a tap on his shoulder and, turning, found the tall young man who was making the fuss leaning down toward him, and stretching out his arm for a handshake. “Lyndon Johnson from Johnson City, Texas!” the young man said loudly. “Dick Kleberg’s secretary.”

In the halls of the House Office Building, when he wasn’t working the telephone in 258, Johnson could be seen roaming around with the air of a successful politician. A secretary to a Pennsylvania congressman says, “I remember him bounding in the door every day with a big smile, and saying, ‘Hi! How’s everyone from Pennsylvania today?’ He just *radiated* self-confidence.”

He acted like a successful politician in other ways, too. Despite the thinness of his suits, his first paycheck went not for warm clothing but for a formal portrait—and a hundred prints—by Washington’s most expensive photographer. Inscribing and autographing the pictures, he mailed them back to Texas, as if he were a congressman responding to constituents’ requests for an autographed picture. Recalling this mailing, one secretary says, “What I remember about Lyndon Johnson was his fantastic assurance in everything he did.”

CONFIDENCE? ASSURANCE? THE PHOTOGRAPHS weren’t the only communications that Lyndon Johnson sent to Texas. No sooner had he arrived in Washington than he began writing to Gene Latimer and Luther (“L. E.”) Jones, who, as sixteen-year-olds, had been his debaters at Sam Houston High, and to other young men who had been his students there. These letters were not the conventional letters from a teacher to former students. Though he wrote them late at night, after a grinding day in Kleberg’s office, they were not brief notes but detailed descriptions of his life in Washington that often ran four handwritten pages. And in them he didn’t merely ask his former pupils to stay in touch; he pleaded with them to stay in touch. The happy-go-lucky Latimer was not a faithful correspondent; Jones was, but on one occasion he didn’t reply promptly. “Dear L. E.,” said the next letter from Washington, “have you forgotten me?” And when Jones wrote back, Johnson replied: “Thanks for your letter . . . I had almost begun to think you had quit me too. Haven’t been able to get a line out of Gene et al for weeks. . . . It’s now after 12 and I’ve just finished work. Must drop Gene a note also. Love and for goodness sakes write me a long letter now.” Johnson’s letters reveal not only a penchant for secrecy rather surprising in personal notes (atop one, entirely innocuous, he wrote, “Burn this—others probably won’t understand the personal references”) but also concern about how his letters were being received (“Hope you haven’t

been bored with this long letter”) and an urgent need to be reassured that these two teenagers to whom he had once been close still wanted to be close to him. Pouring out affection, he asked—over and over, in every letter, in fact, that survives—that the affection be reciprocated. In a letter written on a Sunday night (“Haven’t been out of the office all day. Didn’t get up until late this morning so I was forced to rush to work and have been at it until only a few minutes ago. I never get time to do anything but try to push the mail out”), he told Jones, “You are a real boy. I love you and Gene as if you were my own. I know you are going places and I’m going to help you get there.” The letter ends: “Thanks for your . . . letter. I’m waiting for another long letter.”

He needed other letters more than he needed Jones’s. Johnson was very close to his mother, Estelle Harbin says; if a few days went by without the mailbags containing a letter in Rebekah Johnson’s carefully rounded script, Johnson would get “quiet and homesick.”

Sometimes he would get quiet even when the letters from Johnson City were regular, Miss Harbin says. As he had previously done with several other women somewhat older than he, he made a confidante of her, and she had the same picture of him that they did—a different picture from that seen by the young men in the Dodge or on Capitol Hill. “Now, Lyndon had a side to him,” she says. “He could get very low. When he got real quiet, it was bad.” Sometimes, in a phrase that echoes the words of the older women he had known in San Marcos and Cotulla, Estelle Harbin says—although she will not say precisely what she means—“it was *very* bad.” She felt she understood why he ran—not only physically but “in his mind, too”: “He had a burning ambition to be somebody. He didn’t know what he wanted to be, but he wanted to be *somebody*.” He ran, she says, because “he couldn’t stand not being somebody—just could not *stand* it. So he was trying to meet everyone, to learn everything—he was trying to gobble up all Washington in a month.” Dining with him at night, she sometimes felt that even after the long day’s work, “he was still running in his head.” Walking toward her bus in the dark, watching him physically running, gawky and awkward, down Capitol Hill toward the Dodge, she would hope that he would relax when he got there. But often, when she walked the next morning through the only open door in the House Office Building and his pale face turned to her, he would say something that told her he had been running all night, too. When he got quiet, she says, it was because he was doubting himself, because he was afraid he would never get to be somebody. Because she felt she understood him, “sometimes,” Estelle Harbin says, “I felt very sorry for him.”

But if Estelle Harbin saw doubt and fear, no one else did; they saw self-confidence and assurance—“fantastic assurance.” He didn’t want anyone else to see.

And no one else saw.

HE RAN HARDER. IN JUNE OF 1932, ESTELLE HARBIN left Washington and Johnson had the opportunity to hire a new assistant—two, in fact, since among the pieces of information he had acquired at the Dodge was the fact that a \$130-a-month patronage job as mailman in the House Post Office traditionally “belonged” to the Fourteenth District. And he had his new assistants already picked out. He brought Gene Latimer and L. E. Jones to Washington.

Latimer, a little Irish boy with a “wonderful smile”—“the best-natured little guy you ever saw,” says one of the Dodge residents—came for love. His fiancée and her family had moved to Washington, and Latimer was anxious to be near her. He also wanted to earn enough money to get married. The only job he had been able to find in Depression-wracked Houston had been as a delivery boy. Johnson told him a job was waiting for him in Washington. “L. E.” came for ambition. The son of an impoverished druggist, he had spent his childhood in a Houston slum, from which he was desperate to escape; he had worked his way through two years at Rice University but was afraid he would have trouble getting a job when he graduated. Johnson, who had promised to help him “go places,” said the place to start was a government job in Washington.

He got them cheap. So that he could keep for himself the balance remaining for 1932 in the district’s \$5,000 annual “clerk-hire” allowance, Johnson had arranged for Latimer (who arrived several months before Jones) to be given the \$130-a-month mailman job, which put him on the payroll of the House Post Office instead of the district. Since that job was not yet open, he had arranged for Congressman Kleberg to pay Latimer out of his own pocket: twenty-five dollars a month. He would not need much money, Johnson assured him; he could share Johnson’s room at the Dodge and therefore have a place to sleep for only fifteen dollars a month, leaving ten dollars to spend as he pleased.

After a month, Latimer told Johnson that he simply could not live on ten dollars. Johnson arranged to have Kleberg pay him fifty-seven dollars. For several months, that was Latimer’s total salary. When he finally began receiving his \$130, Latimer found it to be a low wage even in Depression Washington, too low to enable him to save much money. It was, however, a higher wage than Jones received. Johnson had persuaded Kleberg to increase his share of the \$5,000 allowance for 1933 to the maximum allowed by law: \$3,900. Jones’s annual salary was therefore the remaining \$1,100, or \$91.66 per month.

And Johnson got a lot for his money. He asked the House postmaster to assign Latimer to the earliest shift, which began at 5 A.M. and ended at noon. Johnson allowed Latimer to take a half-hour for lunch. At 12:30 sharp each day, he said, Latimer was to be in Room 258, ready for work.

This work might be over at eight or nine o’clock in the

evening, Latimer says, “but often I would stay until 11:30 or midnight.” During much of this time, Johnson would be out of the office, cultivating bureaucrats or other congressional secretaries. Latimer would be alone in 258, an eighteen-year-old boy working eighteen-hour days. Soon Johnson found a way to get even more work out of him. “My job in the post office was sorting the mail, pitching it into different bins, and we made two or three deliveries [each day]. He urged me to pitch the mail faster, and I got so I did it faster than any other clerk, and then between deliveries I might have ninety minutes free at a time. And I’d run over to the office [Kleberg’s office], and do ninety minutes of typing.”

By the time Jones arrived in Washington—a third bed was moved into the little room at the Dodge—Kleberg had been given a two-room suite, Office 1322, in the new House Office Building (now known as the Longworth Building), which had just been opened alongside the old one. A routine was soon established for the staff of that office. It began before five, when Johnson shook Latimer awake and started him on his way up Capitol Hill. Not long thereafter, he would awaken Jones. Pulling on their clothes—Johnson had taught Jones his trick of taking off his necktie still knotted so he wouldn’t have to waste time tying it in the morning—Johnson and Jones would hurry out of the Dodge and up Capitol Hill in the dark, past the shadowy mass of the Capitol and into the Longworth Building. Having raced through his mail-sorting and delivering, Latimer would arrive about the same time; at Johnson’s request, he had been assigned to a route that included 1322, so he brought the mail himself.

Ripping open the mail sacks, Johnson would begin sorting through the mail—“reading it so fast that you couldn’t believe he was reading it, but he was,” Latimer says. At first, Johnson dictated replies to every letter, but he discovered that his former debater had a gift of Irish blarney with not only the spoken but the written word. Johnson wanted to flatter “important people” with whom he was corresponding, Latimer says, “to butter them up,” and “he liked to have the butter laid on thick. It was almost impossible to put too much on. If he wanted to tell someone he liked him, he didn’t want to say, ‘I like you.’ He wanted to say, ‘You’re the greatest guy in the world.’” Johnson, riffling through the mail as rapidly as if he were dealing a deck of cards, would hand many letters to Latimer with only the briefest of instructions—“Say yes.” “Say no.” “Tell him we’re looking into it.” “Butter him up.” Latimer would expand those instructions exactly as Johnson wished; Johnson had, in fact, discovered a genius in a minor art form: the letter to constituents. When the last letter had been dealt, Latimer sat down at his desk, in front of a heavy Underwood typewriter, and began typing. To dictate replies to letters on which more detailed instructions were needed, Johnson would lead Jones, carrying a stenographer’s pad, into

the adjoining room, so that, as Latimer explains, "his dictating wouldn't distract me, because my typewriter was supposed never to stop."

When the dictating was finished, and Jones had sat down at *his* Underwood, Johnson would "mark up" district newspapers—the big San Antonio and Corpus Christi dailies and the scores of small-town weeklies—putting check marks next to the articles (a wedding, a birth, the opening of a new business, a local Kiwanis Club election) that merited a letter of congratulations. "Some of those papers would just be filled with check marks," Latimer says. Before most congressional offices opened and began sorting mail, Kleberg's staff had finished sorting it and was well into answering it.

By this time, government agencies were open. Johnson would get on the phone to them, while the two typewriters clattered away. Since that typing was "supposed never to stop," no coffee was allowed in Kleberg's office, because Johnson felt making it and drinking it would distract Latimer and Jones from their work. Less ominous distractions also were frowned on. "If he caught you reading a letter from your mother, or heading for the bathroom, he'd say, 'Son, can't you *please* try a little harder to learn to do that on your own time?'" If Jones asked if he could go out to buy cigarettes, Johnson would say, "What am I paying you for? Buying cigarettes? Buy them on your own time." "Our job was to keep those typewriters humming," Latimer says. "He would come down the hall—I could hear his heels clicking—and if he didn't hear both those typewriters going ninety miles per hour, he wanted to know what the hell was going on." The natural competitiveness of young men was used as a spur. "He had a way of getting us to work even faster," Latimer recalls. "He'd say, 'Gene, it seems L. E.'s a little faster than you today.' And I'd work faster. 'L. E., he's catching up with you.' And pretty soon, we'd both be pounding for hours without stopping, just as fast as we could."

The Depression was swelling the mail now, as more constituents asked for jobs and new government programs, and as veterans appealed more urgently for bonus prepayment. With only one or two staffers in each congressional office, many offices answered more and more of the mail with mimeographed form replies or with *pro forma* promises, or simply didn't reply at all—and still fell further and further behind. Kleberg's office didn't use mimeographed replies and didn't make *pro forma* promises and answered every letter that could possibly be answered. For Lyndon Johnson, the mail possessed almost a mystique. At that time, government programs touched the lives of few constituents, so the mail—the only means through which a congressman could keep friends and make new ones, by performing services for them, by responding to their suggestions, by asking them for advice, and the only means, in a district 2,000 miles from Washington, by which a congressman could keep in touch with his district—was a key to a congress-

man's power. Johnson could hardly have avoided hearing, over and over, about one former congressman or another who had "lost touch with his district"—and who was a congressman no longer. But although other congressional staffers heard the same stories, they didn't answer every letter. For Johnson, the mystique of the mail went beyond the political. So anxious was he to succeed, to flee from what was behind him, to be somebody, that he had done every job, in the words of an associate, "as if his life depended on it." Believing that "if you did just absolutely everything you *could* do, you would succeed," as another associate put it, he had tried to perform every task, even minor ones that no one else bothered with, perfectly. For such a man, congressional mail, which consisted so largely of minor details, was a natural *métier*. Doing everything one *could* do with the mail meant answering *every* letter, and that was what he insisted his office must do. Moreover, for a man who was so insecure that the women who knew him best say, every one, "I felt sorry for him," a man who at first felt he was going to be "buried" by the mail, there was only one way to keep from being buried—only one way to keep the mail from piling up. He adopted that course. Not only must every letter be answered, he told Latimer and Jones, it must be answered the very day it arrived. "The only excuse that was accepted for not answering the same day was that you had lost a file, and, boy, there had better not be too many of those: not being able to find a file—that was some sin!" Latimer says. "And if your reply said, 'We have asked the Veterans Administration to look into this,' you really had to ask—that same day. So that the next day you could write another letter about it." The early-morning mail delivery was only the first of three—and then, as the Depression deepened, four, and then five—made during the day, and still the bundles of each delivery grew heavier. After typing his way for hours through a pile of letters, Jones or Latimer would finally be almost to the bottom—and then Johnson would smack down on his desk another pile, "a pile that," Jones says, "might be a foot high." And before he would be allowed to leave the office that night, the pile would have to be gone.

After the typing came the retyping. No letter was going out of the office unless it was perfect, Johnson said, and to ensure perfection he read every one. "And if he didn't like a letter," Latimer says, "he would just make huge, angry slash marks across it." No explanation would be vouchsafed. "You had to figure out what was wrong," Latimer says. "He wouldn't tell you." A single error in spelling or punctuation and the letter was slashed. "He had no compunction at all about making you write them over," Jones says. "You handed him fifty, sixty letters . . . and he might mark out every one of them."

Finishing at 11:30 or midnight, Latimer and Jones would return to their room to fall exhausted into their beds, to grab a few hours' sleep—for no matter how late they had worked the night before, they would be dragged

from those beds at five o'clock the next morning. Recently completed on the long slope between the Dodge and the crown of Capitol Hill was an elaborate fountain, with streams of water jetting from the mouths of dolphins and cascading down terraces whose lips were crested like waves. This fountain was illuminated by colored lights. The lights were turned off in the daylight. They were on only between sunset and sunrise. "I almost never saw that fountain without the lights on," Latimer says. Returning from his work in the dark, he went back to his work while it was still dark.

THE WILLINGNESS OF THE TWO TEENAGERS TO ADHERE to so brutal a routine—a seven-day routine, for Kleberg's office did not close on weekends—was based in part on admiration for their boss. Listening to him "work the departments" over the telephone, they heard him tailoring his approach to the person he was talking to, bullying one bureaucrat with a threat of bringing down Congressman Kleberg's displeasure on his head (or, with increasing frequency, masquerading as the congressman himself), pleading with another, and obtaining results that they felt other secretaries could never have achieved. Listening, for example, to Johnson talking to the Veterans Administration about a veteran's request that a disability be considered "connected" to his war service, which would make the veteran eligible for a pension, Latimer and Jones would be awed by his glibness. "He could sit there and talk like a great lawyer or doctor," Jones says. And they were amazed by his persistence. If a veteran's request was denied by the VA, Johnson would pursue it by telephone and in person, and if it was still denied, would, without the veteran's asking, arrange for a formal hearing before the Board of Veterans Appeals, at which Johnson would be present. And if the hearing seemed to be going against his constituent, Johnson would not remain a silent observer. When Johnson took a personal hand at a Veterans Board hearing, he displayed his obsession with secrecy, asking that the stenographer be instructed not to take down his remarks, but he also displayed considerable persuasiveness. Reading the typed minutes of the hearing later, Latimer would invariably see the same sentence: *Mr. Johnson spoke off the record*. "I'd say to myself, 'Here it comes!' And sure enough, when they went back on the record again, the attitude would have changed. It was almost unheard of to get someone 'service-connected' after it had been denied, but the Chief did it. Many times."

The two teenagers' willingness to work so hard was based in part on their boss's ability to inspire enthusiasm. To Johnson, Jones says, "every problem had a solution. . . . He was completely confident, always optimistic. . . . And this was contagious. It would absolutely grab ahold of you." Casework was, moreover, not only a crusade but a crusade complete with triumphs, in which

the whole office shared. Johnson reacted to word of success as he had when Estelle Harbin had been present. "He would get ecstatic," Jones says. "I mean we had won a real victory."

They were also willing to work long hours because they were not working alone. If they awoke at five, it was because their boss was awake at five, and if they trudged up Capitol Hill before daylight, their boss trudged beside them. The days they spent chained to typewriters he spent chained to the telephone—bullying and begging on behalf of their constituents. And often, after they had returned to their little room, and were falling asleep, they would hear their boss still tossing restlessly on his narrow bed. "He worked harder than anyone," Latimer says. "His head was still going around when the rest of us had knocked off."

Other factors, however, were also involved. Sometimes, Latimer rebelled. Rebellion was generally related to his fiancée. Johnson had brought him to Washington ostensibly so that he could be near her. But the work schedule that Johnson had set up for him left little time for romance. He was allowed time off from the office to see her on Sundays after 3 P.M.—and only on Sundays after 3 P.M.

The response to rebellion might be a sneer: a sneer with a particularly telling point. Once, Latimer requested an evening off, and was viciously tongue-lashed by Johnson for his temerity. "I couldn't stand it, and I packed the wicker suitcase I had come up with, and said I was leaving." Towering over the little Irish boy, Johnson said, sneering, "How are you going to get back?" When Latimer, sobbing, said, as he recalls it, that he would rather hitchhike all the way to Texas than remain, Johnson said, "What are you going to do when you get there? How are you going to get a job? If you leave, how are you ever going to marry Marjorie?" The suitcase was unpacked, and Latimer remained.

But rebellion was rare. To the great reader of men, Gene Latimer was an easy text. Rebellion could be anticipated, and headed off. "He wouldn't really have a talk with you for months," Latimer says. "And then he would hug you, and he might spend an hour talking about your problems. He didn't do it very often, so you might think he was getting a hell of a lot for not very much, but if he did it very often, it wouldn't mean very much, you know." The way Johnson did it, it meant so much that the hug and the talk generally ended even the hint of revolt.

He could deflect any of Latimer's desires. Latimer was always broke during his years in Kleberg's office, as might be expected on so low a salary. He was always falling behind in his bills for clothing and dry cleaning, and he relates with gratitude how Johnson consolidated his bills, and then collected his salary and paid the bills out of it, putting Latimer on a \$10-a-week allowance. But he also relates how once, "when the pain had been severe for some time," he summoned the courage to ask



L. E. JONES, JOHNSON, AND GENE LATIMER

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about the possibility of a small increase in salary. "He listened with sympathetic concern, commented at some length on the shortage of money and jobs all over the country at the time, and especially in our own office, then told me he had been thinking for some time on how to reward the excellent work I had been doing. He had finally decided that I merited having my name put on the office stationery as 'assistant secretary.' As he described the prestige and glory of such an arrangement, I could see the printing stand out six inches." Latimer accepted the title instead of a raise.

In general, Latimer accepted whatever Johnson gave him. Ask Latimer why he was willing to work so hard, and he replies first, "I guess I didn't know there was any other way to do it. He was the only guy I had worked for. And he keeps the pressure on you all the time. . ." But Latimer himself knows that this is only part of the explanation, and he soon goes on; for Gene Latimer, sixty-seven years old at the time he spoke, sitting alone in a little apartment in a Texas town—a tiny Irish elf with sad eyes that always seem brimming, and that often spill over with tears as he describes his life as an employee of Lyndon Johnson, so that he periodically excuses himself and goes to wash them off his face—understands, even if he was unable to alter, the subservient nature of his relationship to Johnson: to listen to him talk is to hear a man who is fully aware that during his sixteenth year, he surrendered, for life, his own personality to a stronger personality. To listen to him talk is to hear a man who is fully aware that he has been used as a tool. "He never talked to me too much, because with someone like me, all he wanted was to keep me busy," Latimer says. "When he saw me: 'Where's your [stenographer's] book? I want you to take this down.' When he saw me, he just wanted to know what orders he could give me." But the awareness is accompanied by acceptance, not resentment. Johnson called him "Son"; he called Johnson "Chief." Asked if he ever called Johnson by his first name, he replies, shocked, "I would never have *dreamed* of calling him by his first name. He was *The Chief*!" Johnson had found a man who liked taking orders as much as he liked giving them. Gene Latimer talks of Lyndon Johnson with idolatry. "I don't think he's ever been scared in his life." And he talks of him with fear. "He can be mean. He can make people cry. He can make you feel so bad that you could go out and shoot yourself." And he talks of him with a feeling deeper than idolatry or fear. "I had such tremendous respect for the man," he says. "I don't know any other man I had such respect for. And, hell, you just had faith—hell, he could talk you into *anything* and make you feel it was right, and absolutely necessary and proper. He can make you cry, he can make you laugh—he can do anything. And if you like him, then he puts things on such a personal basis, you know. You felt like 'I belong to him, and he belongs to me.' Whatever you do, you do it for *him*."

He did a lot for him. Gene Latimer worked for Lyndon Johnson for the next thirty-five years, as (in the words of another Johnson staffer) "his slave—his totally willing slave." This term of service was not, however, continuous. In 1939 began the first in a series of nervous breakdowns; Latimer spent a substantial portion of his life recuperating from them, and from recurrent, severe, bouts of alcoholism. He understood their cause. "The work broke me," he says. But as soon as he recuperated, he always returned to the same work. Because the work was for Lyndon Johnson.

FOR ALMOST A YEAR AND A HALF AFTER HE WENT TO work for Richard Kleberg, veterans were, in general, the only constituents for whom Johnson could win victories. The mail sacks might be bulging with pleas for help from the farmers of the Fourteenth District, but he had no help to give. On March 4, 1933, however, Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated, and on May 12, he signed into law his Agricultural Adjustment Act and Emergency Farm Mortgage Act. And on May 13, when Johnson opened those letters asking for help, there was help available for him to give.

All the organizational problems that might be anticipated in a gigantic administrative machine created in such haste were present in the Agriculture Department's huge South Building, where clerks were struggling to reduce a nation's agriculture to millions of punched cards running over and over through automatic tabulating machines, each card representing a farmer, his farm, and his complex crop-reduction agreements with the government. Not even in existence in April, by the end of May the AAA had 5,000 employees; the seven-story South Building, as big as three city blocks, was a sea of desks, its miles of corridors crowded with delegations of cotton growers, wheat growers, and dairymen, with packers and processors and farm leaders, in a monstrous bureaucratic maze.

Assistance from his congressman would have been helpful to Johnson in finding his way through this maze, but in the spring Dick Kleberg spent his time at Burning Tree. ("Mr. Dick" was not disposed to cooperate with the AAA, anyway. He would, in fact, have voted against the AAA, which he called "socialistic" and "radical," even after Johnson told him that mail from his district was running thirty to one in favor of the measure, had not Johnson, and the pragmatic Roy Miller, assured him his vote didn't matter because the bill was going to pass by an overwhelming margin.)

So Johnson found his own way. Telephoning an AAA bureaucrat, he would introduce himself as "Congressman Kleberg, from the Agriculture Committee," and ask the bureaucrat to give all assistance possible to his secretary, Lyndon Johnson. Not long thereafter, Johnson would show up at the bureaucrat's office.

Other secretaries similarly used their congressman's name on the telephone to gain entrée, although not as brazenly (or as frequently—it was almost matter-of-course for Johnson to introduce himself as Congressman Kleberg now). But what he did with that entrée was not at all usual. "He was smiling and deferential," says one man who saw Johnson in action, "but, hell, lots of people can be smiling and deferential. He had something else. No matter what a guy thought, Lyndon would agree with him—would be there ahead of him, in fact. He could follow a guy's mind around and figure out where it was going and beat it there." And he touched every base; leaving a bureaucrat's office, he smiled and chatted with the assistants and the secretaries, until soon he had entire bureaus, top to bottom, willing to help him.

He was pushing farmers as well as bureaucrats. Confused by the complexity of the new programs and distrustful of government promises that they would actually receive money for plowing up crops, farmers all across America were hesitating to sign AAA applications and plow-up contracts. Many of the Agricultural Extension Service's county agents, whom the AAA had been counting on to educate farmers about the new programs, didn't understand the programs, and others, Republican-appointed, long in their jobs, and deeply conservative, were unwilling to cooperate with "socialism." Johnson educated his district himself; hour after hour he sat in Room 1322 telephoning his county agents; when he heard about an influential farmer who was balking, he telephoned the farmer. The nationwide progress of the cotton sign-up program was so slow in 1933, despite two appeals by President Roosevelt for cooperation, that on July 11 Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace was forced to announce that the program would be canceled if the sign-up rate did not double. At the time Wallace made that announcement, the sign-ups from the Fourteenth Congressional District of Texas had already far exceeded the district's quota. Applications and plow-up contracts from other districts became stalled or lost in the South Building, because, as a result of the bureaucratic reshuffling and power struggles that never seemed to stop, the bureau to which they were addressed no longer handled them, and no one seemed to know who did. Johnson knew—and he saw to it that applications from his district were sent to the right office. After they arrived, he would show up at that office, and get them moved to the top of the huge piles awaiting action. With approval from a dozen different bureaus required for each contract, contracts from other districts might be stalled for months. Johnson would show up at each bureau—and contracts from the Fourteenth District were approved and back in the mail within days. In a White House ceremony on July 28, 1933, President Roosevelt presented the first AAA check for plowed-up cotton. Its recipient was William E. Morris—a farmer from Texas's Fourteenth Congressional District.

THE COTTON PLOW-UP PAYMENTS ENABLED South Texas farmers to make their monthly mortgage payments, but were insufficient to enable them to pay their arrears. The machinery established by Roosevelt for assistance with these arrears—the mortgage-refinancing Federal Land Bank—was not yet in gear. Not only was refinancing more complicated than plowing up crops; refinancing required appraisals of each individual farm, and during the first three weeks of September alone, 2,631 desperate Texas farmers applied for refinancing to the Federal Land Bank in Houston—whose appraisal staff consisted of nine men. Before the machinery could get in gear, a lot of farms would be lost. Mortgage companies, already overstocked with farms they could not sell, did not want more farms if they could instead get the money they were owed on them, but by fall, they had decided they could wait for it no longer. In October of 1933, sheriffs began tacking up foreclosure notices on sixty-seven farms in the Fourteenth District, farms for which the Roosevelt rescue operation was going to come too late.

With Congress in recess, the district's congressman was home, in Corpus Christi. The farmers appealed to him for help, asking for a meeting. The congressman was not disposed to grant them one, seeing no way in which he could help them, but his secretary said the meeting should be held. He had thought of a plan.

Only the furnishing of new collateral would persuade the mortgage companies to wait for their money. The farmers felt they didn't have any collateral, and in the traditional sense they didn't: their savings, even the butter-and-egg money, were long gone; not only every acre of land but every piece of machinery was already mortgaged. But Lyndon Johnson had thought of new collateral: crops that hadn't been planted yet. The farmers, he felt, should each agree to give their mortgagor a landlord's share—a third—of the 1934 crop, in exchange for a year's extension on the mortgage. The mortgage companies might not normally agree to this, but Johnson felt they would if they could be given assurances that the extension would enable them to get their money—not only current interest payments but the arrears. And Johnson had conceived an innovation that would give farmers enough money to pay their arrears. The richness of the black loam of the Gulf Coast, which produced more cotton per acre than any other section of the United States, had made its farmers prosperous in good times. Johnson wanted to use the richness of the soil to help them in bad times as well. He wanted the Federal Land Bank to agree to take soil productivity into account in deciding how much to lend on a farm. Such an innovation would mean considerably more money for each farmer than the Federal Land Bank had previously been willing to lend, enough to pay the mortgage arrears. The mortgage companies would also, he knew, want assurances that they would get their money on time—within the

year's extension. At the slow pace at which the Federal Land Bank had been moving, no one could be assured of that. So he wanted the pace accelerated. He wanted the Land Bank to promise the mortgage companies that it would give priority to loan applications from the Fourteenth District. He needed, in other words, commitments both for a new policy and for speed in implementing it.

He got them. To obtain the commitments, two requirements had to be met. A Federal Land Bank official had to be persuaded to come to Corpus Christi and meet personally with the farmers; Johnson was sure that a face-to-face meeting with these desperate men could not help but win the official's sympathy. And the official had to be high enough in rank to give commitments on the Land Bank's behalf, so that the sympathy would be translated into the immediate action needed. In dealing with the Federal Land Bank, he had a weapon available. The deputy governor of the bank's parent body, the Farm Credit Administration, was W. I. Myers, an old friend of Dick Kleberg's. Tracking down Myers in Dallas, he put Kleberg on the phone with him, and the old friend agreed to make the 400-mile trip to Corpus Christi himself for the meeting, and to bring with him the president of the Federal Land Bank's Houston office, A. C. Williams. Then Johnson began telephoning; all day, he telephoned bankers and mortgage-company representatives; at night, when they were in from the fields, he telephoned farmers.

And on the evening of October 25, sixty-seven farmers—sixty-seven men who had given their lives to their land, and then had received notices saying that the land would be taken away from them—trooped onto the broad, shady porch of Dick Kleberg's enormous home overlooking the Gulf in Corpus Christi to meet there with the men who had sent the notices and with the two men who could provide the money to save their land.

Kleberg's secretary explained his proposal, and everyone accepted it: the farmers agreed to write letters to the mortgage companies promising them a third of their crop; the government promised to speed, and to liberalize, mortgage refinancing; and the mortgage-holders agreed to accept the letters and the promises, and to take down the foreclosure notices. Myers went off to the King Ranch for a few days of hunting—after first, at Johnson's discreet urging, telephoning the head of the Land Bank appraisal division in Houston. Within a week, all sixty-seven farms had been refinanced; by the end of the year, Federal Land Bank mortgages, stretching out amortization payments from five years to fifteen, and reducing interest payments from 8 percent to 4, had been given to every endangered farm in South Texas.

Whatever the New Deal program, Johnson reaped for his district every dollar it could provide. He urged district farmers to repay their 1933 crop-reduction loans as

quickly as possible, so that they could get new loans—so that, as a press release from Congressman Kleberg's office put it, "the record for this section would remain on the favorable basis established and so that this section would be in a position to ask for consideration on any farm matters which might arise in the future." On November 19, 1933, the AAA announced that the Fourteenth Congressional District of Texas had the best loan-repayment record of any of the nation's 435 congressional districts. And in 1934, the district received the type of "consideration" Johnson had had in mind: it was the first congressional district to have every one of its crop-reduction loan applications approved by the AAA. (Eighty-five percent of its farmers had applied for these loans, a figure that may itself have been the highest for any congressional district in the nation—the figures are unclear on this point.) Other specific figures are impressive testimony to Johnson's diligence. During the first ten months the Federal Land Bank program was in operation, the only period for which this figure is available, not a single Land Bank loan request from the Fourteenth District was turned down. Although district-by-district figures are not available for the Home Owners Loan Corporation, 450 HOLC loans were made in Corpus Christi alone, a figure that appears to be the highest in the United States for a city of its size. As other New Deal programs—CWA, PWA, WPA—were inaugurated, the district received more than its share of these, too: so many CCC camps (one, at Floresville, was named for Kleberg), for example, that when, in 1936, the government established limits to the number in any one district, the Fourteenth was a distinct embarrassment.

Four hundred and thirty-five congressional districts: among them districts represented by congressmen of long seniority, whose favor even a President had to court; among them districts represented by congressmen who chaired powerful committees; among them districts represented by congressmen who were allies of the New Deal; among them districts represented by congressmen who worked hard for their constituents. Few districts fared better under the New Deal's programs than this district represented by a junior congressman who opposed the New Deal—this district whose only asset on Capitol Hill was a young secretary who worked for it with an almost desperate aggressiveness and energy.

WITH AGGRESSIVENESS AND ENERGY—BUT WITH another quality, too. With the quality that had led the first politician he worked for, watching the twenty-one-year-old volunteer worker in action, to suddenly realize that he was watching someone "gifted with a very unusual ability." With the quality that had led the canny politicians of Austin, watching him, at the age of twenty-two, ramrodding eight tough districts

in a statewide race, to call him "a wonder kid" of politics. With the talent for politics that was beyond talent and was genius.

There existed in Washington an organization called "the Little Congress."

It was a moribund organization. Formed in 1919 to provide congressional secretaries with experience in public speaking and a knowledge of parliamentary procedures, it was modeled on the House of Representatives, and held debates under House rules. But it had degenerated into little more than a social club, whose desultory meetings, held in the Cannon Building's chandeliered Caucus Room, were attended by no more than a few dozen secretaries.

In April of 1933, Johnson approached a few carefully selected fellow residents of the Dodge Hotel and asked them to help him become the "Speaker," or presiding officer, of the Little Congress.

As in the House of Representatives, seniority and line of succession had determined the selection of previous Speakers: at each election, only one new officer, a sergeant-at-arms, always an older man with long Washington tenure, was chosen; the other officers each simply moved up one notch, the former sergeant-at-arms becoming clerk and the clerk becoming Speaker. Johnson, however, had a plan to sidestep this practice.

The plan depended on secrecy. William H. Payne, who ran for sergeant-at-arms on the Johnson ticket, says Johnson had determined that so many new secretaries had been brought to Capitol Hill in March by the new congressmen elected in the Roosevelt landslide that their votes would give him the Speakership—if the older secretaries, who still far outnumbered the newer ones, did not realize what he was planning and turn out in force at the April meeting. To minimize chances of discovery, he waited to launch his campaign until only a day or two before the election, and when he campaigned, he campaigned not in person but by telephone—remaining in Kleberg's office and calling new secretaries in other congressional offices to ask for their votes—so that there would be as little activity visible as possible. He had discovered another cache of votes: although only congressional secretaries had attended past meetings of the Little Congress, and there existed a general impression that only secretaries were eligible for membership, the organization's bylaws actually made any person on the "legislative payroll"—including Capitol Hill mailmen, policemen, and elevator operators appointed under congressional patronage—eligible so long as he paid his two-dollar dues.

Johnson told Latimer to round up his mailmen friends and bring them to the meeting, and not to tell them about the meeting until the last possible moment. He asked a friendly elevator operator to do the same with the other elevatormen, and repeated the enjoinder of secrecy. And on the night of April 27, 1933, as a few handfuls

of Little Congress regulars sat all but lost in the rows of seats in the spacious Caucus Room, they were taken completely by surprise when, just as the meeting was about to begin, there suddenly burst into the room enough newcomers to crowd it to the doors—and to elect as Speaker a tall, thin Texan, whom few of the older men even knew. "Who is that guy?" one asked, as Johnson came forward to take the gavel.

(When, the next day, the older men collected their wits, they had other questions—about the honesty of the election. Many of the votes that had elected Johnson, they said, had been cast by men not eligible to vote. Many of the mailmen and elevator operators who had shown up for the first time had not paid their dues, they said, and hence were not members of the Little Congress. Moreover, they said, many of the new voters could not be members, even if they paid dues: Johnson's supporters, they charged, had simply rounded up every Capitol Hill employee they could find, whether or not the employee had been appointed under congressional patronage. Soon, questions about the honesty of Little Congress elections began to increase. Little Congress bylaws allowed a Speaker only a single term. While Johnson made no attempt to change the bylaws—in the opinion of at least one ally, because there had already been too many rumors about the circumstances under which he had been elected—he kept control of the organization through hand-picked candidates. Ballots were counted by officers of the Little Congress, who, after that April election, were all allies of Johnson. At subsequent elections, rumors began to circulate not only that votes were being cast by ineligible voters—by mailmen and policemen who were not members of the Little Congress—but that votes were also miscounted in favor of Johnson's candidates. As several secretaries put it, "He was stealing the elections." These suspicions—the same that had swirled around Johnson at college—were not explored for two years, until the March, 1935, meeting of the Little Congress. Then a group of members opposed to Johnson's candidates asked, in a surprise move, that the ballots be counted publicly, in front of the audience, by one teller from each side, and that the names of the voters be checked against a membership list. And the first time that the suspicions were checked, the result proved to be precisely what Johnson's opponents had charged it would be. A number of votes for his slate proved to have been cast by persons who were not members of the Little Congress. With those votes thrown out, Johnson's candidates lost.)

During 1933 and 1934, Johnson turned a social organization into a political organization—into an organization, moreover, to serve his own ends.

One of those ends was entrée—the entrée a congressional staffer needed but found so hard to obtain. Henceforth, Johnson announced, meetings would be held not every month but every week, and would include not only debates but speeches by "prominent figures." And

"LITTLE CONGRESS" RECEIVES GAVEL



FROM GARNER—Members of the "Little Congress," an organization composed of secretaries to Senators and Representatives, received an historic gavel, made from a tree planted by Sam Houston, from Vice President Garner. Pictured are Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas, speaker of "Little Congress"; Vice President Garner and Representative Anell.

THE LITTLE CONGRESS PROVIDED JOHNSON WITH PUBLICITY

although the new Speaker said the reason for this innovation was to make the meetings livelier, his teenage assistants knew there was another reason as well. Latimer says, "It gave him an excuse to go and see Huey Long or Senator Tom Connally or a Texas congressman who was head of a committee he thought he might need for something, and invite them to speak, and once he got in to see somebody, the Chief, being the way he was, would make them remember him."

Another end was publicity. First, he organized the Little Congress debates. Previously, anyone who wished could speak; now only assigned speakers could take the floor. He made the assignments, naming teams to represent both sides of an issue currently before Congress (one "floor leader" would generally be the aide of the congressman who had introduced the bill, the other the aide of a congressman who opposed it); kept checking with the leaders to make sure they were actively organizing their teams; further formalized the atmosphere by assigning speakers places at the long witness table that ran across the front of the Caucus Room. Sitting at the center of the long raised horseshoe used by congressional committees, he ran the debates strictly. Payne says, "The first time he presided, everyone knew: by George, here was a man who was running the show. The Little Congress was run by the same rules as the House of Representatives, and he knew those rules. He was his own parliamentarian, and there wasn't anyone who could argue with him about

whether the proceedings were proceeding according to the rules, because he *knew* them. He was in *command*." At the end of each debate, the Little Congress voted on the "bill." Once he had the debates organized, he persuaded newspapers to cover them. Congressional aides generally reflected their bosses' feelings, he told reporters, and Little Congress votes on pending legislation were therefore previews of upcoming votes in the big Congress. The reporters came, and were impressed; "one of the most interesting forums in Washington," the *Washington Post* said. And when they found that House votes could, indeed, be predicted on the basis of voting in the Little Congress, they began to cover it regularly, in stories that generally contained a statement from—or at least a mention of—its Speaker. Assured press coverage made even the most famous political figures receptive to Johnson's invitations to address it. When Johnson said he was inviting the colorful and controversial Huey Long to speak, recalls Wingate Lucas, another Little Congress member, "none of us thought he could pull it off." But sure enough, Long came. The Caucus Room was, one secretary says, "just crowded with newsreel cameras. Pathé News and Metro News and all that. . . . There were lights all over the place, these movie lights. A tremendous number of reporters were there." And when Long came into the room, surrounded by a phalanx of tough-looking bodyguards, the Speaker of the Little Congress was there to welcome him, shaking his hand and smiling at him as the flashbulbs popped and the cameras rolled.

Soon two hundred or more congressional aides were crowding into the Caucus Room every week. Wingate Lucas, who some years later was Speaker himself, says, "Little Congress became *quite* a big thing. Members of Congress wanted their bills debated by the Little Congress for publicity, and because it would help prepare them for debate on the floor. So if you were Speaker, you were respected by members of Congress, and *called upon* by members of Congress." In a remarkably short time—in little more than a year spent on Capitol Hill as a congressional aide—Lyndon Johnson had, through an organization in which advancement had previously depended upon longevity on the Hill, lifted himself dramatically out of the anonymous crowd of congressional aides.

Johnson's control of the Little Congress tightened. He never campaigned publicly for the candidates he supported. "Word just circulated around that so-and-so was Johnson's candidate," Lucas says. "He did everything behind the scenes." But behind the scenes he was very effective. A half-dozen Johnson allies would telephone other members before each election to suggest who should be supported. It became understood that antagonizing Lyndon Johnson was not a good idea for anyone who wanted to advance in the only organization in which advancement was possible for congressional secretaries. "He had a machine," says Lacey Sharpe, a former secre-

tary. "And if you wanted to run, you had better have the blessings of Lyndon Johnson." The machine's existence had become an acknowledged reality in the self-contained little world of Capitol Hill. Another secretary, newly arrived on the Hill, recalls seeing Johnson for the first time. Struck by his appearance—his height, his huge ears, his flashing eyes and smile, the confidence with which he walked, arms akimbo, down a House Office Building corridor—the secretary asked a friend who he was. The friend replied, "That's the Boss of the Little Congress."

Did his "very unusual ability" work only with contemporaries? Only with the congressional secretaries who were his equals in rank? The Speakership of the Little Congress may have furnished Johnson with entrée to officials other secretaries never got to talk to; it was the use he made of the entrée that awed those contemporaries who had a chance to see him use it.

At the Department of Agriculture, for example, the hundreds of patronage jobs created by the new Agricultural Adjustment Administration programs were dispensed by three tough Tammany politicians: Julian N. Friant, special assistant to the secretary of agriculture, and Friant's assistants Vincent Maguire and Lee Barnes. Even congressmen had difficulty getting these men on the phone; for most congressional secretaries, personal communication was all but impossible. Congressional secretary Lyndon Johnson wanted another assistant to help with his district's mail, and, with no more room on the district's payroll, he wanted the assistant, Russell M. Brown, a young law student from Rhode Island, put on Agriculture's. Aware of the inaccessibility of Agriculture's personnel trio, Brown was startled when Johnson casually suggested running over to see them. He was even more startled by the reception Johnson received. When Johnson told Maguire, whose office they went into first, "Mac, I got to have a job for Russ, here," Maguire replied simply, "I can arrange it, Lyndon." ("That's great," Maguire added with a smile, "Texas helping Rhode Island.") Then Maguire said, "Would you like to say hello to the Boss?" and they all strolled down to Friant's office, where the reception was equally warm. ("The Chief and Friant got along fine," Latimer recalls. "Anything he could do for the Chief he was happy to do.")

Brown was to receive a larger shock. While they were chatting in Friant's office, the door opened, and in walked Friant's boss, the great personnel director himself, chief patronage-dispenser of the New Deal, Postmaster General James A. Farley. Brown stared, almost speechless, at this living legend, but Farley, he says, "was very affable and shook hands." And Johnson, who had met Farley when the Postmaster General accompanied Vice President Garner to the King Ranch some months before, was affable right back. "This is my friend Russell Brown from Rhode Island," he said. Farley, who never forgot a name—or a political affiliation—remembered

something Maguire and Friant hadn't. He asked Brown if he was Charles Brown's son, and then said to Friant, "What are you doing helping a Republican?" A moment of tension ensued, but it evaporated when Johnson, putting his arm around Brown, said expansively, "He's *mah* Republican." Everyone burst out laughing, Brown recalls, with the Postmaster General, beaming at Johnson, laughing loudest of all.

Other Capitol Hill aides witnessed similar scenes. Not only, they came to realize, did Johnson know powerful officials who were in a position to help him; these officials knew *him*, knew him and liked him, and wanted to help him. A measure of this feeling was the number of patronage jobs Johnson obtained in the AAA and other newly formed New Deal agencies, such as the Home Owners Loan Corporation and the Federal Land Bank. Such jobs were generally rationed by the New Deal on the basis of a congressman's importance. The office of the average congressman might be given four or five, the office of a senior or powerful congressman perhaps twenty, the office of a committee chairman as many as thirty or, in rare cases, forty. The office of Richard Kleberg, a congressman with neither seniority nor power, was given fifty.

DID HIS ABILITY WITH THE POWERFUL CONSIST MERELY of the capacity to make friends with them?

One Texan notably unmoved by Johnson's charm was Vice President Garner, whose desire for new friendships was limited. "Me and my wife," tough old Cactus Jack explained once. "My son and his wife. We four—and no more." As for his paternal instincts toward bright young men, even his son was able to obtain a loan from him only after he had agreed to the most onerous terms. In May of 1933, the Texas Legislature redrew the state's congressional districts. Seeing Garner's hand in the redistricting, Texas congressmen feared it would be present as well in the confusion that was going to follow. During the year-and-a-half interim before the redistricting went into effect, in January of 1935, federal patronage in counties that had been shifted from one district to another would be in dispute between the congressman they had elected and the one into whose district they had been shifted. In some counties, moreover, a vacuum would exist: three new districts had been formed by taking counties away from old districts; these counties would have no opportunity to elect a new congressman until November of 1934. Aware of Garner's ruthlessness and appetite for power—and of his long and close friendship with Postmaster General Farley—Texas congressmen feared he would step into the vacuum by claiming, as the state's highest federal official, the patronage power in counties in which it was in dispute. After a number of secret caucuses, they still didn't know how to meet this threat.

One of their secretaries did. Lyndon Johnson had not,

of course, been present at the caucuses, but Kleberg had told him about them, and he had a suggestion. If, instead of fighting among themselves, all twenty-one congressmen—plus Texas's senators, Tom Connally and Morris Sheppard—agreed on a division of patronage powers, both vacuum and confusion would be eliminated. Without a vacuum, Garner's maneuvers would become more difficult; without confusion to cloak them, they would be revealed as a naked grab for power. A united front among the congressmen would deter Farley, too, since he wouldn't want to interfere in a state's internal politics against the wishes of its entire congressional delegation. Such a united front, Johnson said, should take the form of a signed "gentleman's contract" between all Texas congressmen and senators stating that patronage power in every Texas county would remain in the hands of its present congressman until the redistricting went into effect. And when Kleberg asked how Connally and Sheppard, who might themselves see confusion as an opportunity for patronage gains, could be induced to go along with the congressmen, his secretary had an answer for that, too. The two senators, jealous of their statewide powers, would be as worried as the congressmen about the Garner threat; therefore, they would agree if they were given a small inducement: the right, previously reserved to the local congressman, to name the postmaster in their home towns.

Johnson drafted the agreement: "Until January 1, 1935, present representatives of the district shall control in counties of their present existing districts. . . . We ask that this agreement be respected by all [federal] departments and offices." Kleberg was reluctant to engage in a fight, particularly with his old friend Garner, but Johnson told him that the existence of a clear agreement was the way to avoid one. And when he reminded Kleberg, to whom personal honor was very important, that in return for support in his last election he had promised federal positions to supporters in Bexar County, which had been removed from his district in the redistricting, and that if the right of appointment was given to Garner he would be unable to live up to his promises, Kleberg agreed to circulate the "contract" to the whole delegation. Everyone signed it. And when, in January of 1934, Garner made his move—Texas congressmen who submitted recommendations to Farley on federal postmasterships in the redistricted counties were told to clear them with the Vice President—Johnson knew how to use the weapon he had forged. He leaked the agreement to the press—not to a local Texas newspaper but to the Associated Press. Huge headlines ("REVOLT AGAINST PATRONAGE ARRANGEMENT") and angry editorials ("Postmaster Farley's insistence upon giving Garner control . . . will make political orphans of dozens of Texas counties") in Texas, combined with nationwide publicity, had precisely the effect Johnson had calculated.

Within the week, Garner had beaten a hasty retreat. In the presence of a "grievance committee" of Texas congressmen, he dictated a document of unconditional surrender—a letter of his own to Farley. "Dear Jim: . . . a committee representing the Texas delegation are in my office at this moment. They are very much worried about the proposal that I pass on qualifications of postmasters in the new districts in Texas, and, to be frank with you, Jim, I am worried about it myself because of the friction that might arise between the Texas members of Congress and myself. . . . I want to ask you if you won't relieve me of the burden of saying anything about the qualifications of any postmaster anywhere in Texas." Farley agreed to Garner's request, dashing off a letter of his own telling Texas congressmen to submit their recommendations directly to him, as in the past. William S. White, then an Associated Press correspondent in Washington, recounts that "for days [Garner] went among fellow Texans with a scowling, half-amused demand: 'Who in the hell is this boy Lyndon Johnson? Where the hell did Kleberg get a boy with savvy like that?'" Others familiar with the episode say White's description is accurate except for the hyphenated adjective; Cactus Jack Garner was not even half-amused. Garner's question, moreover, was a natural one. "This boy Lyndon Johnson"—a twenty-five-year-old congressional aide—had defeated, in a small but bitter skirmish, the Vice President of the United States.

FEW, IF ANY, CONGRESSIONAL SECRETARIES implemented New Deal programs more successfully than Lyndon Johnson. His assistants were, therefore, surprised when they realized what Johnson thought of the New Deal. The man with whom he was "most in tune," says L. E. Jones—and Gene Latimer and Russell Brown agree—was Roy Miller, the legendary lobbyist who had made the district's office his own. Miller looked to the three young assistant secretaries like the very model of a southern senator. Erect and dignified, he strode through the Capitol as if he owned it—which, some said, in the areas in which he was interested, he did; with the seemingly unlimited funds at his disposal for "campaign contributions," he bought national legislators as easily as state. The three young assistant secretaries in the Fourteenth District office admired Miller and were awed by him—by his manner ("He was so suave and smooth," Jones says); by his salary ("He was making \$80,000 a year, and this was during the Depression!" Latimer says); by his luxurious suite at the Mayflower; by the way in which, in those days before regular air service, he seemed to stride around the country as easily as he did around the Capitol. "Roy Miller would call from Texas . . . and say, 'I'm going to be in the office in the morning,'" Jones recalls. "It was always quite a thing that he'd call from Texas on Monday and be in the office

on Tuesday, because he would come up in a private airplane." And their immediate superior was just as impressed, they say. "Lyndon hero-worshipped Roy Miller," Jones says.

If in public Miller seemed the archetypal southern senator, however, in private he might have been the model for another caricature: the wealthy businessman venomously ranting and raving, in Peter Arno's *New Yorker* cartoons, about That Man in the White House.

Miller and a group of friends would often gather in Kleberg's office for a late-afternoon drink. These men were Roosevelt-haters, who saw in the President's programs the erosion of the power and the privilege so dear to them, and their hatred was made more bitter by the President's popularity, which forced them, for the sake of expediency, to keep their feelings hidden. So in the privacy of Kleberg's office, their laughter at the latest scatological joke about Franklin's physical disabilities, or about Eleanor, was all the louder, and their railing against "Reds," and against the "dictatorship" being foisted on the American people, and against the "socialists," "Communists," "Bolsheviks," and—even worse—college professors who surrounded the dictator was all the more vehement. Of that group—Martin Dies, later chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee; Kleberg himself; Horatio H. ("Rasch") Adams, a Kleberg golfing partner and reactionary lobbyist for General Electric; other ultra-conservative Texas congressmen such as Nat ("Cousin Nat") Patton, James P. ("Buck") Buchanan, and Hatton W. Summers—no one laughed louder or railed more vehemently than Roy Miller. Lyndon Johnson was always invited in for a drink. Since the door between the suite's two rooms was open, Jones, Latimer, and Brown could hear what their Chief was saying.

His tone with these powerful men was very different from the tone he used with *them*. It was a tone that would have been familiar to the classmates at San Marcos who had heard him talking to professors, for on Capitol, as on College Hill, he was as obsequious to those who were above him as he was overbearing to those who were not. "In talking with these guys," L. E. Jones says, "Lyndon was very much the young man, very starry-eyed, very boyish. It was very much the junior to the senior. 'Yes, sir.' 'No, sir.' " His position, too, would have been familiar, because even if there was a vacant seat in Kleberg's office, Johnson would often be sitting on the floor, his face upturned to whoever was speaking, an expression of the deepest interest and respect on his face. To the surprise of Johnson's three young assistants, their Chief not only flattered these men but agreed with them, agreed enthusiastically. "Miller just *hated* Roosevelt," Jones says, "and Lyndon was in tune with Miller. Hell, sometimes he was louder against Roosevelt than Miller was."

At first, Jones assumed that Johnson did not believe

what he was saying. Johnson's energy and enthusiasm in implementing New Deal programs in his district had led Jones to assume that his Chief supported the philosophy behind those programs. Moreover, Jones, watching Johnson's constant display of thank-you letters from constituents, had seen in his Chief a deep "need for gratitude," and, as Jones put it, "For someone who needs gratitude, the New Deal is the natural philosophy, because it lets you do things for people, and therefore gives you the greatest opportunity to get gratitude." But Jones and his fellow assistants were soon convinced that their initial assumption had been incorrect.

And Johnson did not, for a while at least, espouse a conservative philosophy only in the company of conservatives. During bull sessions at the Dodge, Johnson, echoing one of Miller's pet phrases, would say of Roosevelt, "He's spending us into bankruptcy." The President's first priority, he would repeat emphatically, should be to "balance the budget." Most of the young men of "A" and "B" floors were liberal; Lyndon Johnson was the basement conservative.

He was "in tune" with Miller, moreover, not only in talk but in action. When, for example, Kleberg's bid for re-election was challenged in the Democratic primary by a more liberal candidate, Johnson and Miller orchestrated a campaign that tarred the liberal as a "Communist," guilty of "radicalism" and similar "filth and slime." Jones concluded—and Brown and Latimer and a dozen other aides who knew Johnson at the time agree—that Johnson was implementing the philosophy of the New Deal without believing in it.

Even during the period in which Johnson harmonized most loudly with the anti-New Deal sentiments of Roy Miller and other powerful reactionaries, he sang quite a different tune in the company of powerful liberals. Once, a congressional aide, who had just heard Johnson "talking conservative" with Martin Dies, came across him "not an hour later," "talking liberal" with populist Congressman Wright Patman. When talking with older men, men who could help him, Lyndon Johnson "gave them," this aide says, "whatever they wanted to hear."

Younger men he gave nothing. There was a sudden change in his behavior at the Dodge. For a time, he had been "B" floor's conservative; then, abruptly, he started, in the words of another "B" floor resident, "shifting gears," drawing back from his position. Other residents noticed that on two consecutive nights, Johnson would argue on opposite sides of the same issue. And then, in a very short time, he stopped arguing about issues at all. He would no longer, in fact, even discuss them. His silence in this area was especially conspicuous because of his volubility in all others. If political tactics, for example, were being discussed, Johnson would be the center of the discussion. If the discussion concerned political issues—philosophy, principles, ideas, ideals—Johnson would not be part of it. He would refuse to take a stand

even when directly challenged to do so, turning aside the challenge with a joke, or a Texas anecdote. During those first exciting years of the New Deal, when discussion of great issues swirled through Washington, nowhere was discussion more animated than in that basement home of a hundred bright young men in government. Amidst the swirl the tall, skinny figure of Lyndon Johnson stood untouched. The son of a man who had said, "It's high time a man stood up for what he believes in" seemed ready to stand up for nothing.

Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, who would later spend a lot of time with Johnson, felt that she understood why "no one ever knew exactly where he stood on a particular issue." He possessed, she said, the ability to look quite far ahead down the road of his career. "He was always aware that what he said might be repeated years later, and he didn't want someone to come back years later, and say, 'I remember when you said . . .'"

The young men at the Dodge saw Johnson's ambition expressed in other ways. The Texas State Society, composed of all the Texans in Washington, held monthly dances in various Washington hotels. At these dances, young men danced most of their dances with young women, but not Lyndon Johnson. He danced almost exclusively with older women. "I don't remember his ever taking a girl [to a dance], but he would dance with all the wives of all the congressmen and Cabinet officers," Brown recalls. Even the adoring Latimer felt he knew why. "He danced with members' wives because he didn't know the husbands, and the wives would introduce him," he says. Other aides held the same opinion. Brown recalls standing with a group of friends from the Dodge and watching Johnson dancing, and one of them saying: "Do you notice he ignores the young, pretty, single women? He's dancing with all the wives." Another said: "Lyndon's campaigning for something." And a third chimed in: "He never quits campaigning. He's always campaigning."

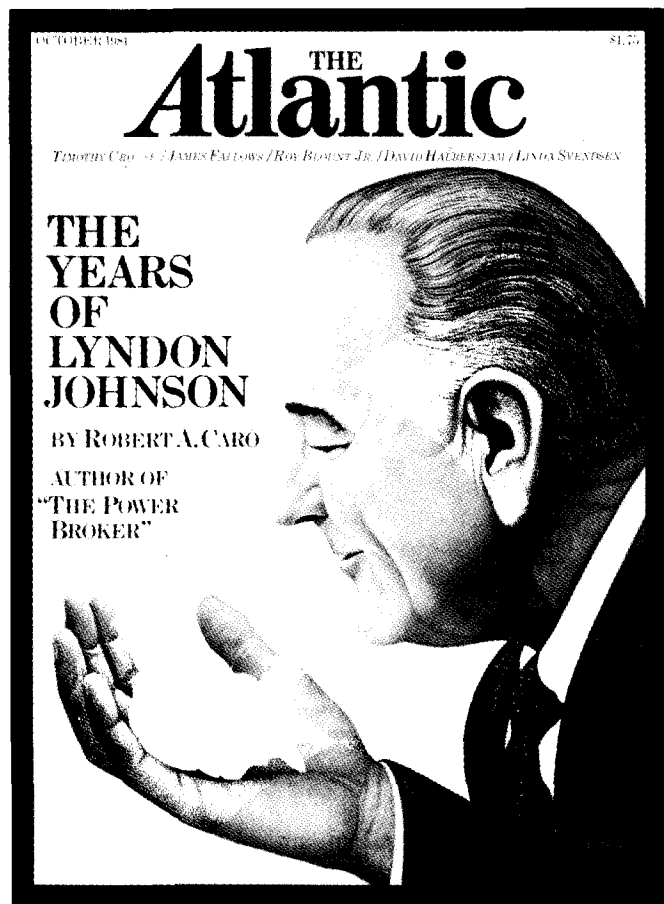
Ambition was not uncommon among those bright young men at the Dodge, but they felt that Johnson's was uncommon—in the degree to which it was unencumbered by even the slightest excess weight of ideology, of philosophy, of ideals, of beliefs. "There's nothing wrong with being pragmatic," one says. "Hell, a lot of us were pragmatic. But you have to believe in *something*. Lyndon Johnson believed in *nothing*, nothing but his own ambition. Everything he did—*everything*—was for his ambition." A saying about Johnson had gained wide currency among these young men, because they felt it described him accurately: "Lyndon goes which way the wind blows."

To those closest to him—the three assistants who worked in the same office—the statement that "Lyndon Johnson believed in nothing" is an oversimplification. He did, they feel, have beliefs—quite conservative beliefs.

His "basic orientation," Brown says, "was on the conservative side." Jones says, "Intrinsically, he was conservative." But, they feel, the crucial point is that regardless of what his beliefs may have been, beliefs had little relevance to his career. Having spent years in close proximity to Johnson, they feel sure that beliefs didn't have the slightest influence on his actions. "In his actions," Jones says, "I don't think Lyndon was either a conservative or a liberal. I think he was whatever he felt like he needed to be. . . . Winning is the name of the game. I have no doubt that he could have become either an ultra-liberal or an ultra-conservative, if that would have brought victory. Now that suggests hypocrisy, doesn't it? But, well—winning is the name of the game."

SOON THERE WAS SYMBOLIC PROOF OF THIS JUDGMENT. During redistricting in 1933, Bexar County (the city of San Antonio) and its 240,000 inhabitants had been split off from the Fourteenth Congressional District and placed in a new—Twentieth—district. In 1934, it would elect its own congressman. One of the candidates had been impressed, during a visit to Washington, by Kleberg's "very efficient" secretary, with his "ready entrée into all of the government departments"; upon his return to Texas, he told reporters that "Lyndon B. Johnson . . . is considered to be the brightest secretary in Washington." He asked Johnson to work for him during the 1934 Democratic primary, which would be held during Congress's summer recess. Johnson, with Kleberg unopposed in the primary, agreed—although the candidate was Maury Maverick, the fiery radical whose utopian schemes and fierce defense of Communist organizers in Texas had already caused an opponent to charge him with a desire to "supplant the American flag with the Red flag of Russia."

Arriving in San Antonio with Latimer and Jones in tow (he had persuaded the genial Kleberg to "donate" all three of them to the Maverick campaign), Johnson put them to work mailing out brochures. He himself began writing them. Soon he was writing speeches and serving as an adviser—one of Maverick's inner circle. And he was a campaigner, as well—a campaigner whose "very unusual ability to meet and greet the public," in Welly Hopkins's description, was as effective in San Antonio's teeming Mexican-American ghettos as in the isolated little towns of the Hill Country. The *embrazo*, or embrace, was a key element in campaigning among Mexican-Americans, and Johnson had always been addicted to hugging and kissing. Towering above swarthy men in brightly colored shirts and old women in black *rebozos*, the tall, skinny, pale young man with the big ears and long arms was a conspicuous figure as he *embrazoed* his way enthusiastically through the crowded, pushcart-jammed San Antonio slums. Maverick won the June primary, but not by the requisite plurality, so a second pri-



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mary, in August, was required. Johnson spent most of the intervening two months handling Kleberg's affairs in Corpus Christi, but on weekends he would race back to San Antonio. During the summer of 1934, therefore, Johnson was working simultaneously for one of the most reactionary members of Congress and for the man who would, immediately upon his arrival on Capitol Hill a few months later, be one of the most radical.

The 1934 Maverick campaign also marked Johnson's first involvement with one of the more pragmatic aspects of politics.

Awakening early one morning a day or two before the election, in the big room in San Antonio's Plaza Hotel that he shared with Johnson, L. E. Jones experienced an awakening of another sort. Johnson was sitting at a table in the center of the room—and on the table were stacks of five-dollar bills. "That big table was just covered with money—more money than I had ever seen," Jones says. Jones never learned who had given the cash to Johnson, but he saw what Johnson did with it. Mexican-American men would come into the room, one at a time. Each would tell Johnson a number—some, unable to speak English, would tell the number by holding up fingers—and Johnson would count out that number of five-dollar bills, and hand them to him.

"It was five dollars a vote," Jones realized. "Lyndon was checking each name against lists someone had furnished him with. These Latin people would come in, and show how many eligible voters they had in the family, and Lyndon would pay them five dollars a vote."

"EVERYTHING WAS FOR HIS AMBITION."
Elective office, Johnson was starting to say now, was what he wanted. "You've got to be your own man if you're going to amount to anything," he told Russell Brown. He knew *which* elective office he wanted. Once, Brown recalls, "he was talking about somebody who . . . had run to succeed his boss . . . and he said: 'That's the route to follow.'"

A few adjustments began to be made in the physical arrangement of Suite 1322. Under standard practice in congressional offices, the senior aide placed his desk as far as possible from the front door, so that subordinates would "handle"—and shield him from—casual visitors, mostly tourists from the district. Now Johnson moved his desk immediately inside the entrance door, "so that," in Latimer's words, "no visitor could possibly advance further without his interception." In part, Latimer says, the purpose of the shift was "to keep the typewriters humming. If anyone talked to L. E. or me, we'd have to stop typing. And that typing was supposed never to stop." But Latimer began to suspect there were other reasons as well. Johnson did not want to be shielded from visitors from the district. Visitors were voters. The new position

of his desk ensured that he met voters. A favor routinely bestowed by congressmen's offices—passes to House and Senate galleries—frequently impressed visitors and made them grateful. Johnson wanted visitors—voters—to receive that favor from his hands. The position of his desk ensured that they would. "The casual visitor who just 'happened to be in town' was weeded out" by Johnson, who "talked with him thirty seconds, and had him out of the office and on his way in another thirty, happily clutching" his passes, Latimer says. Sometimes, moreover, a casual visitor would turn out to be what Latimer calls "an important person" back home. "The Chief would steer him into Mr. Kleberg's [vacant] private office," sit down (behind the congressman's desk), chat with him, ask if there was any favor he could do for him, and strike up a friendship, which would be cemented a few days later by a "buttering-up" letter from Latimer.

Noticing that such private audiences were held not only with "important persons" but with any visitor who happened to mention an interesting piece of district political gossip, Latimer felt there was still another reason for the change in the position of Lyndon Johnson's desk: "He didn't want anything concerning his district—no matter how small—going on without him knowing about it." Positioning himself right at the door was Johnson's best defense against such a contingency, Latimer understood.

This defense contained one loophole. Each of the two rooms in a congressional suite had its own door to the corridor outside, and, in the casual atmosphere of the 1930s, those doors were both generally kept unlocked. Visitors—particularly knowledgeable late-afternoon visitors who were aware which door led to Kleberg's private office, and who wanted to see the congressman without being cleared by his staff—were able simply to walk in that door, knowing they would receive his invariably pleasant welcome.

Now that loophole was closed. Johnson locked his boss's door, and kept it locked. Kleberg never objected to this new development—he may not have noticed it: he customarily entered and left the two-room suite through the anteroom, so that he could chat with his staff. If he did notice it, he did not understand its significance. But Latimer understood. "He didn't want anyone to see Mr. Kleberg without going through him first; he didn't want anyone seeing Kleberg that he didn't know about," he says. The effect of locking Kleberg's door, moreover, was in a small but not insignificant way (since a visitor knowledgeable enough to know the right door was probably an important visitor) to isolate the congressman from his district, to give a tighter hold on it—at his expense—to his secretary.

Latimer and Jones began to notice some other changes. Johnson had always been diligent in grabbing for his boss the credit for federal projects—a PWA sewer or a CCC camp—in the district. Now he still grabbed the cred-

it—still raced for Western Union and got the wire off to the mayor of the lucky town before Connally or Shepard—but not always for his boss. More and more now, the releases he dictated began: “Congressman Kleberg’s secretary, Lyndon B. Johnson, announced yesterday that . . .”

As was, of course, the custom in all congressional offices, letters advising individuals that they had received federal favors—pensions, visas, private bills—had always gone out over the congressman’s signature, to ensure that the gratitude was directed to him. Now the letters being mailed out of this office were beginning to have a different signature, as well as a different opening phrase: “In the Congressman’s absence, I am advising you . . .”

And more and more of a certain portion of the district’s business—its political business—was no longer transacted by letter. In Kleberg Country, all chairmen of county Democratic organizations had been Kleberg men: personal friends of Dick’s and of his relatives’, or men economically in thrall to the King Ranch, either as employees of ranch-controlled enterprises or as businessmen dependent on its favor. Now Johnson persuaded Kleberg that a tighter organization was needed in the district. (Not much persuading was needed, Latimer recalls. “Anything the Chief wanted, Mr. Dick would just say, ‘Sure, go ahead.’ He didn’t care.”) Johnson began to tour its nineteen counties. He met the Democratic county leaders, but he also met other leaders—the local banker, the local lawyer, the editor of the local weekly newspaper, the farmer who, his sharp eyes observed, was the man other farmers listened to at meetings of the local Grange or the county AAA crop-control committee. Upon his return to Washington, he asked county chairmen to send in regular reports on local political conditions. Those chairmen who responded found themselves in correspondence with Johnson, who replied to their letters the day they were received and asked for another letter in return. Failure of a chairman to respond regularly was the excuse Johnson needed to have a co-chairman appointed—and these co-chairmen were not Kleberg men but men with whom Johnson had, during his tour, established a personal rapport. He made certain, moreover, that each of these new appointees understood that he owed his appointment not to Kleberg but to him.

In communicating with these men, he used the telephone. Each month, when Latimer opened the phone bill, the list of long-distance calls to Texas grew longer.

One explanation for Johnson’s increased use of the telephone was his desire for secrecy. The door between Kleberg’s private office and the staff’s anteroom had always been open. Now, more and more, it was closed, for when the private office was vacant, Johnson would go into it to telephone and shut the door behind him, for hours at a time. When he was forced by Kleberg’s presence (or, more likely, Roy Miller’s) to use his

own telephone in the anteroom, he would often cup his hand around the mouthpiece to prevent Latimer and Jones from overhearing his words. Other clues about these conversations were also kept to a minimum. In the past, Johnson’s invariable practice during telephone calls had been to jot down lists of things to be done as a result of the call, so that Latimer and Jones could do them. Now—on these calls made with his hand shielding the mouthpiece—nothing was put in writing. “Once, we had known just about everything that was going on in the district,” Latimer says. “Then we started to realize that there was starting to be a lot going on that we didn’t know about.”

Latimer began to wonder whether use of the telephone was providing Johnson with an advantage beyond secrecy. From the few words he overheard, he knew that the telephone calls to these new friends in the district often concerned favors, including the obtaining of federal patronage jobs, that Johnson was doing for them. Written communications—press releases and letters—were, more and more, bearing Johnson’s name as well as Kleberg’s. In these verbal communications, Latimer wondered, was one of those names being omitted entirely?

“In a letter,” Latimer says, Johnson “would have to sign the congressman’s name,” or, even if he signed his own name, he would have to make clear that he was only acting for his boss. “The letter would have to say, ‘At the Congressman’s suggestion, I am’ doing such-and-such . . . It might have been dangerous for him otherwise. But on the telephone, it was *him*—Lyndon Johnson—speaking, not Dick Kleberg.” Latimer had, in fact, discerned an overall pattern in his Chief’s behavior. “Before, he had been making friends for Mr. Dick. Now he was making friends for himself instead.”

Latimer was right. A new political organization was being created in the district, an organization that was coming, more and more, to be centered not on the district’s congressman but on the congressman’s secretary. The purpose of Johnson’s creation was not to take his boss’s seat away from him—there was not the slightest chance of anyone defeating a Kleberg in Kleberg Country—but to place Johnson in a position to take the seat should it become vacant.

And he was working to make it become vacant.

The minimum age at which a person could become a congressman was twenty-five, and Lyndon Johnson would become twenty-five on August 27, 1933. During that year, there began a quiet movement to float the name of Richard M. Kleberg for the post of ambassador to Mexico. Stories were planted in Texas newspapers; one went out on the Associated Press national wire—no one was quite sure who was planting them. There began to be some talk about the possibility in Washington; no one was quite sure who had started it. The Texas State Senate even passed a resolution formally proposing Kleberg for the post; the introducer of that resolution was State

Senator Welly Hopkins. Kleberg loved the idea; he had little interest in being a congressman, and, he often said, of all the cities he had ever visited, Mexico City was his favorite. For a while, Miller and other Texas insiders thought he was going to get the ambassadorship. He didn't; it went instead to Josephus Daniels. But periodically thereafter, whenever any hint was received in Washington that Daniels was tired of the post, the quiet push for Kleberg would begin again. Having determined the route he wanted to follow, Johnson was paving it.

BUT WAS HE ALSO PAVING A LONGER ONE? ONE THAT only he saw? One that he, who talked so much, never talked about at all?

Since he was not a resident of the adjoining—Twentieth—congressional district, in which Maury Maverick had won election, he was not eligible for elective office in it. But his interest in that district did not cease with Maverick's election.

The key appointive post in the district was the San Antonio postmastership, which controlled 600 postal-service jobs. Since the incumbent postmaster's four-year term was to expire during 1934, before Maverick took office, under the "gentleman's contract" that Johnson had devised earlier that year, Kleberg, as the area's former congressman, had the right to name the new postmaster. Kleberg didn't care about the successor's identity, Russell Brown says, but Johnson cared. He had his postmaster all picked out, in fact: Dan Quill, a tough young Tammany-style Texan from the San Antonio stockyards and a power in the city's labor circles. "You see Dan Quill, and you see 5,000 votes," Latimer says.

Kleberg's nomination of Quill evoked demands from the old-line San Antonio machine for intervention by Garner, a longtime ally, but the Vice President, having lost one skirmish over the "gentleman's contract," declined to participate in a second, and when the machine nonetheless persisted, Brown remembers, Johnson "put on a first-class war" and got the appointment for "Kleberg's" man. To cement Quill's allegiance to him, he got Quill's sister, Eloise, a job with the Department of Agriculture, in Washington. Had Johnson devised the "gentleman's contract" in anticipation of the San Antonio postmaster fight—because he already had his candidate for the job picked out? Was that the real reason he had had Kleberg give the document his imprimatur, and thereby persuade the other Texas congressmen to sign it? No one knows, but the appointment that resulted from the contract was to prove important to Johnson over not only the long run—Quill would be his staunch ally in San Antonio for thirty-five years—but the short. An extravagant admirer of Lyndon Johnson, Quill immediately began handling small but vital political favors for Johnson in San Antonio and giving jobs to at least a few of Johnson's San Antonio friends.

Johnson and Maverick, who had hit it off so well during Maverick's first trip to Washington a year before, became fast friends when Maury arrived to be sworn in. The friendship was based partly on Johnson's ability to talk as liberal with the liberal Maverick as he could talk conservative with conservative congressmen. Discussing a New Deal bill coming up in Congress, he would demand: "You're not going to throw down the President on this, are you?" Partly it was based on Maverick's admiration for what he had called Kleberg's "very efficient" office setup; at his request, Johnson showed Maverick's secretary, Malcolm Bardwell, a newcomer to Washington, how to set up the Twentieth District office. (Maverick autographed a photograph: "To Lyndon Johnson, who got me started.") And Johnson cemented the friendship. Maverick's younger brother, Albert, a resident of Kleberg's Fourteenth District, was given a coveted patronage post there. Johnson was only a congressional secretary, but he had influence now—influence on a level that most congressional secretaries never achieved—not just in one congressional district but in two.

And not just in two.

Among the more popular of the rubber stamps provided by the office of the House stationery clerk was one that read: RESPECTFULLY REFERRED TO _____. Most congressional offices routinely employed that stamp on all out-of-district requests. A staffer would smack the stamp down on the letter, fill in the name of the proper congressman to see, and drop the letter in the "Out" file. "The normal man working for a congressman doesn't care about people living in other districts," Latimer points out.

In the office of the Fourteenth Congressional District of Texas, however, the use of that stamp was more selective. "We would not do what was normally done," Latimer says. "Not if the person needing something was important, not if he knew other people who were important, not if he had money." If a person needing something was "important," Johnson would work for him—and have his assistants work for him—no matter where he lived.

More and more important businessmen needed "something"—specifically, entrée—in Washington, as government regulation of and participation in business escalated. They needed guidance through the immense, jerry-built maze of bureaucratic regulation; they needed introductions to officials who could help them circumvent those regulations; they needed someone who could tell them whom they should see and who could get them in to see him.

Businessmen from Richard Kleberg's district learned that his office could provide them with that entrée—and, because Johnson was making friends now not for Mr. Dick but for himself, the shrewder of them learned that it was not Mr. Dick who was providing it. Becoming exas-

perated over his inability to reach Kleberg on the telephone, former Texas State Senator Alvin J. Wirtz, an influential and powerful attorney for a score of Nueces County clients, as well as the Humble and Magnolia oil companies, asked Russell Brown one day, "Do you suppose if I called the Burning Tree Golf Club I could get our congressman?" The embarrassed Brown said, "Well, I just don't know where he is, Senator Wirtz."

"I know, I know," Wirtz said with a grim chuckle. And then, Brown recalls, Wirtz said, "Lyndon isn't there, is he?" And when Brown said no, Wirtz asked to have Johnson, not Kleberg, call him back, and said, "I know *he'll* call me." And after that, Brown says, "He stopped asking for Congressman Kleberg and he always called for Lyndon."

Johnson, of course, always *did* call back, and provided influential district residents not only with the assistance they requested—whether it was hard-to-obtain hotel reservations on their trips to Washington or aid of a more significant nature—but with assistance they had never thought of requesting. For example, Elmer Pope, a wealthy Corpus Christi businessman, wanted introductions to the staff of the House Interstate Commerce Committee in connection with a bill that would provide federal aid for Corpus Christi. Johnson provided him with the introductions—and, unasked, with a detailed memorandum on the need for the legislation which Pope could present to the staffers.

Attempting to impress such men with his entrée and competence, to make them feel secure in his hands, he was careful never to let them realize what young and low-level hands they were; he never let them see his living quarters. The one prominent visitor from Texas who saw the Dodge basement—Welly Hopkins—was shocked. "They were living just like youngsters, like in a dormitory," he recalls. When they asked for hotel reservations, Johnson provided them—as if it were easy for him to do so. The visitors never suspected that because he possessed in fact no influence with hotels, he was often forced to frantically telephone one after another until he found a room—and sometimes, when he had been turned down everywhere, to make a trip in person to see a reservation manager, and spend his own money on a big tip. He never gave them even a hint of the difficulties he might encounter in attempting to secure interviews for them with high-ranking officials—difficulties that occurred frequently with officials who did not need Congressman Kleberg's support on a pending bill, and who had never heard of Congressman Kleberg's secretary. His care was rewarded. Businessmen from the Fourteenth District were as impressed as he could have wished. And when businessmen from other Texas districts complained to them that *their* congressmen couldn't provide much help with the Washington bureaucracy, they would suggest calling Dick Kleberg's secretary.

The newly formed Lower Colorado River Authority, for



MAURY MAVERICK

example, was planning to operate not in south but in central Texas. But its counsel was Wirtz, and he told the board members that it was to the Fourteenth District office that the Authority should look for help in Washington. Thomas C. Ferguson, the board member who accompanied Wirtz to Washington, saw that Wirtz was right.

Entrée was vital to the LCRA, whose planned construction of a series of flood-control dams required not only funding from the PWA but permits from a dozen federal agencies. Provisions of the legislation under which the State of Texas had created the agency, moreover, made it necessary to obtain the funding and permits very quickly. Some of the officials they needed to see, Ferguson says, were "high officials"; one was Jerome N. Frank, then chief attorney for the Federal Power Commission. "And we couldn't get in to see them," Ferguson recalls. "Senator Wirtz said, 'Let's go over to Kleberg's office and see Lyndon. Maybe he can help.'" Ferguson was surprised to see how friendly the powerful and normally reserved Wirtz was with this young secretary. "They had a love fest there, for a few minutes," Ferguson says. Then Wirtz told Johnson whom he needed to see. Johnson made an excuse not to call Frank and the other officials while Wirtz and Ferguson were present; he did not want them to see the shifts to which he would be put

to arrange the appointments. When, that night, he telephoned the two Texans at their hotel, he simply told them the appointments had been made, as if it had been no trouble at all. And the image he had wanted to create with the visitors was the image he created. "Johnson called over there, and got us in to see them real quick," Ferguson was to recall. "He helped us a whole lot. Senator Wirtz was very much impressed, and so was I. He knew Washington. He could get you in to any place."

That was the word on Lyndon Johnson—that he "knew Washington," that he could "get you in to any place." And now that word was beginning to be heard in wider and wider circles; it was beginning to be heard in conversations of wealthy and influential men across all the length and breadth of Texas. John Garner, they said, was a good man to know in Washington. Certain senior and powerful Texas congressmen were good men to know. Certain senior and powerful Texas lobbyists were good men to know. And so was a young man who was only a secretary to a congressman. More and more, in Houston and Dallas and El Paso, businessmen who needed help in Washington were turning not to the offices of their own congressmen but to Dick Kleberg's office, and to Dick Kleberg's secretary. Although he was the secretary for only one congressional district, Lyndon Johnson was creating an acquaintance—the kind of acquaintance that matters—in twenty congressional districts, across the entire vast state.

HE WAS CREATING—ACROSS THAT STATE—more than an acquaintance. As the New Deal's new programs resulted in new bureaucracies, and as the bureaucracies swelled and swelled again, thousands of new federal jobs were created, jobs that could be filled with minimal reference to merit, since Congress, in approving the new agencies, had thoughtfully exempted many of them from civil-service requirements. The choice plums on this spreading patronage tree were out of the reach of Dick Kleberg, junior and inactive as he was, not to mention the reach of his secretary. But the secretary plucked quite a few jobs on the tree's lower branches: in government mail rooms (Gene Latimer's best friend, Carroll Keach, of Houston, was stuffing gray bags for the Federal Housing Administration); at the endless banks of desks in the Department of Agriculture's South Building (where Eloise Quill had been joined by several other young women from the Fourteenth Congressional District of Texas), and in the immense federal warehouse on D Street, S.W., that was the temporary headquarters of the Treasury Department's vastly expanded Procurement Division (where at least one of its 2,000 clerks, Ivan D. Bell, addressed Lyndon Johnson as "Chief"); and in nooks and crannies of federal service ranging from library stacks on Capitol Hill (several Kle-

berg constituents were researchers at the Library of Congress) to border-crossing stations on the far-off Rio Grande (federal customs officers along the Mexican border came under Kleberg's patronage, and by 1935, Latimer says, "Johnson just about had the final say on who got hired to the Border Patrol").

Low-ranking and low-paying, these jobs were nonetheless precious, in the Depression, to the persons for whom Johnson obtained them. They included young men who had graduated from the teachers' college at San Marcos, only to find teaching positions all but unavailable; young men from the Hill Country who had, against long odds, managed to put themselves through not only college but law school, only to find that hanging out a small-town shingle meant starvation; and other young men from the Hill Country who, without a college education, had been able to find no job at all. "Lyndon didn't make you rich," says one of them. "But he got you a job." Ben Crider, of Johnson City, received a \$145-a-month job as an appraiser with the Federal Land Bank's Houston office, and could hardly believe his luck. "The best job I ever had," he says. They were very grateful. San Marcos graduate Ernest Morgan says, "I would have done anything within reason that he asked me to do."

Cementing the gratitude, in some cases, was self-interest and ambition. The ability of a contemporary, a young man with whom they had gone to school, to distribute jobs reinforced their belief that he was "going somewhere, somewhere *up*." And, one of them says, "I had sense enough to tie on [to him], because I wanted to go up with him."

Gratitude—and other aspects of the quality he considered most important, the unquestioning obedience that he called "loyalty"—was, in fact, the prime qualification for a man receiving a Johnson job. The college classmates who got government positions from Johnson were men who had demonstrated at college a willingness to follow his leadership. Meeting them for the first time, L. E. Jones observed that they were all slow-talking, good-natured country boys and that they shared another quality: all, he says, were "yielding" in nature, men willing to take orders.

Some, in fact, now demonstrated that quality anew. Intending to be a lawyer, one of Johnson's San Marcos classmates, Willard Deason, had been studying law at night while teaching in San Antonio's Alamo Heights High School. But when, in 1934, he obtained his law degree, school officials "sort of halfway" promised him the principalship. That prospect, with its annual salary of \$4,500, made him ecstatic. Johnson had gotten him a summer job as a \$125-a-month junior attorney with the Federal Land Bank's Houston branch. Deason was planning to return to Alamo Heights in September. Johnson, Deason recalls, said, "So you get to be a principal—what's that? If you're a lawyer, you can get ahead in the world." Deason says, "Johnson was very insistent that I

stay at the Land Bank." Deason agreed to stay at the Land Bank for a while.

In determining whether or not a potential recruit had the Johnson brand of loyalty, Johnson sometimes had to be guided by what he saw in a single meeting. But he had very sharp eyes. His relationship with these recruits over the years to come, in fact, was to demonstrate that if Lyndon Johnson was not a reader of books, he was a reader of men—a reader with a rare ability to see into their souls.

In no field was Johnson's energy—his willingness to do whatever was necessary to accomplish a goal—more evident than in obtaining and filling patronage positions. Hearing that a job was opening up, he would spend endless hours on the telephone talking to men who might be willing to make another telephone call to the man in charge of hiring someone to fill the job, and who might be willing to ask the man to give it to someone recommended by Dick Kleberg's secretary. Such patronage was vital to him. "I remember hearing Lyndon say that this business of getting these people jobs is really the nucleus of a political organization for the future," Russell Brown says.

And his work paid off.

A network was springing up, a network of men, linked by an acquaintance with Lyndon Johnson, who were willing, because of Lyndon Johnson, to help each other. Johnson had few jobs at his disposal; if one of them was vacated by the friend for whom he had obtained it, he wanted it to be passed on to another friend. Deason's acquiescence to Johnson's insistence that he not return to Alamo Heights meant that a job would be vacant there when school re-opened in September of 1934. Deason did not notify school officials of his change of heart until the very day that classes began in September. And it had been arranged that at the very moment when Deason was telephoning a school official to say that the school needed another teacher, another teacher was actually standing in the official's office, application in hand: San Marcos graduate Horace Richards, who was quickly hired. "We always passed jobs on this way," Deason says. Johnson, in fact, had "passed on" his own. When he had left Sam Houston High School to become Kleberg's secretary, he had persuaded school officials, in something of a quandary because of the suddenness of his departure, to hire as his replacement San Marcos graduate Hollis Frazier. Frazier, at Johnson's suggestion, later passed his job on to San Marcos graduate Bert Horne; Richards passed his on to San Marcos graduate Buster Brown.

Among the significant aspects of this network was its location. More and more of the jobs he was obtaining now were in Texas—all across Texas. Kleberg's secretary had parlayed Kleberg's friendship with Myers, of the Federal Land Bank, into a friendship for himself with the head of the Land Bank's Houston office. That office was to hire

294 appraisers and attorneys in the first two years after its establishment. Among them would be Ben Crider and Bill Deason—and a dozen other men hired on Johnson's recommendation. Also in Houston, of course, were Sam Houston High and Hollis Frazier. In San Antonio there were Horace Richards and Buster Brown—and Dan Quill and his post-office jobs. In Austin, when the Federal Housing Administration opened a branch office, there was an appraiser or two. And in Corpus Christi, and in many of the little towns of the Fourteenth Congressional District, there were postmasters and rural mail carriers, and WPA and CCC employees. Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Corpus Christi—the network was beginning to cover a significant part of Texas.

It was not yet a political organization. It was, however, what Lyndon Johnson said it was: the nucleus of a political organization. Thanks to his skill in distributing the meager resources he possessed, the skill with which he had selected the recipients of his precious jobs, those jobs were held by men bound—by gratitude, by ambition, by love—to a single leader, even though that leader was still only a young congressional aide. They were men he could count on. The road he saw before him—the road to the dim, vast ambition about which he never spoke—was a very long road. Though its general direction—elective office—had become clear, he still couldn't see its turnings, still didn't know which of many paths he would follow. But now, as a result of his genius in distributing jobs, he could be sure that, whatever the paths he chose, he would not be without assistance when he trod them. As a far-seeing and determined explorer caches supplies along a route he knows he will follow in years to come, so that they will be waiting for him when he needs them, Lyndon Johnson had cached along *his* route the resource indispensable to his plans: men. These men were hidden now, low-level aides in nooks and crannies of vast bureaucracies. But when he needed them he would be able to call them, and they would march at his command.

Geography had always been a barrier to the ambitions of Texas politicians. The state's vastness, coupled with its division into 254 counties—more than twice as many as in any other state, each with its own independent political machine—(and coupled also with the strict constitutional limits placed on state governmental powers by a citizenry notably distrustful of government) had blocked efforts to achieve statewide political power. During the ninety years since Texas had become a state, only Governor James E. ("Farmer Jim") Ferguson had been able to form an organization responsive in all corners of Texas to the command of a single man. In ninety years, only one statewide political organization had been created—by an immensely powerful and resourceful governor.

Another was being created now—by a congressional aide, one of a thousand congressional aides, not yet twenty-seven years old. □

*Billy Ray Bates obviously could play basketball,
but could he play in the NBA?*

AN INSTINCT FOR THE GAME

BY DAVID HALBERSTAM

IT WAS MORRIS BUCKWALTER WHO FIRST SUGGESTED THAT the Portland Trail Blazers sign Billy Ray Bates and bring him up for the tail end of the season. Stu Inman, the player personnel man, had scouted him in the minor leagues and liked him. But it was Buckwalter who suggested clearing a roster space for him. Buckwalter was a ubiquitous figure in basketball. He had scouted, served as an agent, coached in the colleges, coached in the pros; he seemed to have held every conceivable job in basketball, save that of commissioner. But if he had held virtually every kind of job, so too had he left virtually every kind of job, sometimes voluntarily, sometimes, given the nature of the profession, not so voluntarily.

Buckwalter was a man of surprisingly little personal ambition in a profession peopled, apparently, by demented workaholics. He had an eye for appraising talent, he was an exceptional scout, but he had one major flaw as a coach: victory did not really seem full of meaning for him, and, even more important, defeat was clearly not shattering. In the 1978-1979 season he coached a team in the Western League. At the time the job at Portland, as assistant to Jack Ramsay, came open, Buckwalter was about to fly to West Germany to coach there. ("The Western League," one of his friends said, "wasn't seedy enough for him.") While Ramsay was in every sense driven, disciplined, and organized, Buckwalter was relaxed—given to missing planes while on scouting missions, sometimes staying at the wrong motel. The difference between the two men seemed to show most dramatically in their bodies. Ramsay, Nautilus-honed, was lean and muscled; Buckwalter was constantly overweight, not a source of irritation to him, nor to his wife, but one, of course, to Ramsay. ("Buck's a good man . . . I like Buck . . . But he's thirty pounds overweight and he ought to lose it . . . It's not really good for him to carry that extra weight . . .")

Buckwalter admired Ramsay greatly as a coach. He believed that Ramsay's departure from college athletics to begin coaching in the pros had immediately brought distinction to the professional game. But during the losing 1979-1980 season, as Ramsay became tighter and

tighter with each defeat, Buckwalter often found himself walking in a kind of grim and silent DMZ between players and coach. Besides, Ramsay was so dominating a personality that he left little for his assistant to do. During the one minute allotted for a time-out, Ramsay would talk for fifty seconds, providing a complete and concise description of what the Blazers were doing wrong and how they should remedy it. Then, with ten seconds left, Ramsay would turn to Buckwalter. "Anything you want to add, Buck?"

In the spring of 1980, Buckwalter was forty-five years old. He had been a college star in the mid-fifties, playing for excellent University of Utah teams. Sometimes he wished he had cared more about basketball as a boy, and had concentrated more on it. But he had lived in an America where sport was not yet industrialized, where the average American kid played baseball in the summer, football in the fall, and basketball in the winter. Now talented kids chose one sport and played it year round, at the age of ten paying to attend clinics and camps run by professionals. In 1956, upon graduation from college, Buckwalter had been chosen in a middle round of the NBA college draft by the St. Louis Hawks and offered \$7,000 a year for his services. He never thought seriously about accepting the offer. He had an ROTC commitment to fulfill, and, besides, the life of a professional athlete seemed short of both money and glamour.

By the time Buckwalter came to realize how much he loved basketball, he also realized that the game had gone beyond his limited physical skills. The coming of the black athletes had changed the game and made players like himself obsolete. He was six feet four inches, but, with the blacks coming in, he was a small six four. Like all the old-fashioned players, he had exceptional hand-to-eye coordination, but *bodies* were what counted now. By the early sixties, the game had, in his words, "gone in the air." He remembered when he had first realized it, watching two predominantly black teams, Cincinnati and Loyola of Chicago. During the game, he had felt an immense excitement. This was a sport in which he had excelled—in fact, in his time he had been one of the best, an All-America mention—and now he was watching a generation of young black men so superior in gifts that he could not even imagine playing against them. He knew that this Cincinnati-Loyola game was not going to be an

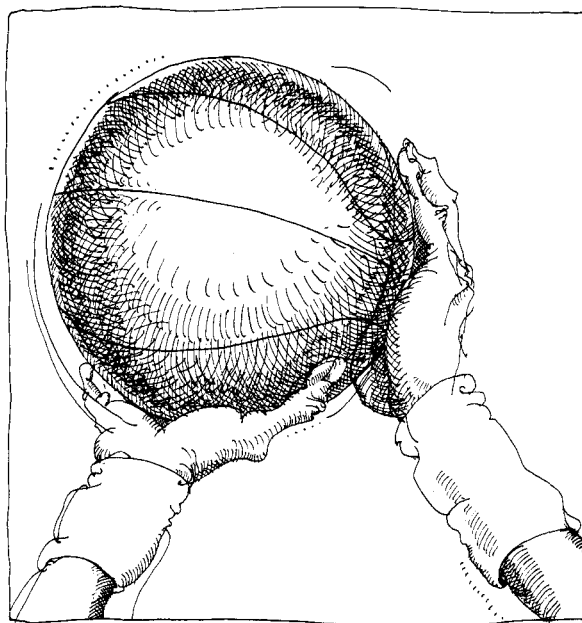
David Halberstam's new book, *The Breaks of the Game*, will be published soon by Knopf.

isolated phenomenon. Given the number of superb black athletes in the country, and the greater educational opportunities sure to be available to them, the sport, he sensed, was about to change color. Watching that game, he knew that the coaching rules of the past, so carefully drilled into players like him—where to set your body, where to position your feet—were now meaningless. Those rules were for a slow game played on the floor by slow players, and this was a new, acrobatic game, in which players floated above the floor.

The coming of the black athlete had always moved him. As a young Mormon boy in LaGrande, Oregon, he had played alongside a young black boy. Some of his friends, fellow Mormons, had been appalled. Mormon doctrine held that blacks were unequal, and Mormon practice was still worse. Torn between friendship and his church, Buckwalter became deeply concerned. Later, as a college coach, he had worked hard to open up the colleges of the West, many of them Mormon, to black athletes. If these colleges accepted black athletes, he believed, painful though the process might often be for the young men involved, in the end the colleges would gradually open up to all kinds of black students. He met a black wheeler-dealer in Washington, D.C., who seemed to know every talented black playground star, and for a time they set up an unofficial partnership. When his friend came up with a black player otherwise unable to go to college, Buckwalter would contact a number of junior colleges throughout the Far West, and, eventually, four-year colleges. In those years, he specialized in working the back country of the South, watching all-black colleges go at each other in high-scoring games. Often he was the only white in attendance.

In the spring of 1978, during one of his swings through the South, he stopped off at an All-Star game in Portsmouth, Virginia. It was a game designed for the semicastoffs of the sport, black players not quite good enough for the big, post-season tournaments, such as the Aloha Classic in Hawaii. The Portsmouth game was held in a local high school gym. The crowd was black and it wanted above all flash and dunk. Looking around, Buckwalter recognized many of the men watching the game, scouts and coaches still hoping for a better job, for the chance to escape basketball's shadowland. From time to time he saw in those men just enough of Morris Buckwalter to make him nervous.

On that day in Portsmouth, a young black kid from



Kentucky State named Billy Ray Bates had been dazzling, a player of awesome but almost completely undisciplined talent. The crowd had immediately adopted him as its favorite. Bates seemed to hang in the air, and then hang some more, and then dunk over much taller players. He touched something deep in Buckwalter, who instantly saw all the natural ability, but also the skills not yet mastered, the things kids with better luck would have learned by their second year at Indiana or UCLA or North Carolina.

During the next two years, while Buckwalter was coaching in the Western League and then in Portland, Bates became the dominant player in the Continental League. In January of 1980, it became clear that Kevin Kunnert, the Blazers' back-up center, was out for the season. Buckwalter started pushing Stu Inman, the team's general manager and director of player personnel, and Ramsay to sign Bates. With Kunnert out, Buckwalter argued, there was a place on the roster. Bates, he said, was a great raw talent, well worth a try. If Portland signed him in the normal way and he came to a rookie camp, he would likely be shunted aside, quickly lose confidence, and fail. But if he could sign on now, the pressure would be far less, he would have a chance to learn the plays more slowly, he could practice with the team every day, and he might be able to make it. If he made it, he might become a truly great basketball player. It was almost impossible, Buckwalter said, to exaggerate how much natural talent he had, and also impossible to exaggerate how little coaching he had been given.

Inman was interested but ambivalent. He had seen Bates, and agreed that he had exceptional talent, but he was unsure that so undisciplined a player could fit into as disciplined a system as Jack Ramsay's. Like most basketball people, Inman doubted that Bates's head was equal to his talent. Ramsay seemed unconvinced too. He had heard about Bates and he was not very enthusiastic about what he had heard.

BILLY RAY BATES WAS A CHILD OF THE FEUDAL SOUTH, the son of sharecroppers. His people had lived the most primitive lives imaginable, lives just a step removed from slavery. He was born in Goodman, Mississippi, a village near Kosciusko, the town that had produced James Meredith, the young man who at great personal risk had integrated the University of Mississippi

in the early sixties. Bates did not know for whom Kosciusko was named; since so many Choctaw Indians lived in the area, he had always assumed that it was named for a Choctaw chief. The plantation on which the Bates family toiled was huge; a man could work all his life on that one piece of land and never see the end of it, he thought.

Billy Ray's father was Frank Bates, known as "Shack." Shack was not a good worker, nor, Billy Ray came to realize, a very happy man. Billy Ray's early memories were of him laughing and playing, but then, when Billy Ray was about five, he seemed to change. He was hot-tempered and began to work less and to get into more fights. Increasingly, he would spend the day drinking, returning to his family late in the day when he was drunk. Soon Ellen Bates had to protect her children from their father. When Billy Ray was seven, his father died. From then on, he and his four brothers and four sisters had to contribute. When he was a sophomore in high school, the family stopped sharecropping and started paying rent. Their new home, however, had no electricity and no indoor plumbing; the family had very little food, and not enough clothes. He decided when he was quite young that when he grew up, the first thing he would do was buy a good house for his mother, not just so that she would have electricity and indoor plumbing but so that when it stormed, the lightning and thunder would not seem to be right there inside the house. Of the eight children, he was the next to the youngest. When he was about ten years old, he told his mother his intentions. "We'll see, we'll see," she said.

BATES WAS IN SOME WAYS MUCH LUCKIER THAN MANY black Mississippians of his generation. He was born in 1956, two years after the Supreme Court had ordered the South to integrate its schools with all deliberate speed. Whites departed for their new instant private schools. But they left behind for the young blacks of Mississippi something previously unattainable—first-rate gyms, generous athletic budgets, and a tradition of newspaper coverage of local high school sports events. That made the high school teams, now black, a point of community focus. Bates's coach at McAdams High School, Wilson Jackson, then twenty-seven, was a black Mississippi native who had grown up with far less in the way of state-supplied facilities.

Even in the seventh and eighth grades, Bates had hung around the gym trying to get on the basketball team. No matter that he was smaller than the other kids and too young to be on the team. Finally, when he was a high school freshman, Jackson allowed him to join the varsity. His shooting eye was exceptional, and his body was growing and filling out quickly. He loved shooting the ball but had less interest in playing defense. Whenever McAdams was behind, Jackson sent him in. Once in a game, Bates

refused to look his coach in the eye—he was afraid Jackson might pull him.

By the time he was a sophomore, Bates was the strongest player on the team. He already had a powerful body and great jumping ability. No one had ever taught him to jump; he could do it from the first day he tried. He could dunk the ball, and he lived for those moments, sailing above the rim and then slamming the ball *down*; in that brief moment, he felt all-powerful; he was up and everyone else was down. Jackson realized that Bates was of college or pro caliber. Mississippi was Jackson's home and he had no great desire to go anywhere else, but he knew what it could do to young people. The signs of defeat, he knew, came early. The boys would start dropping out of class, and then slipping out of school. Then they would start drinking. The drinking was a way of showing off at first, of being big men. But once a boy started, he rarely stopped. Jackson was sure Bates could play college ball. The problem was to get him that far in school. The moment the basketball season was over in his sophomore year, Bates simply disappeared. School was a gym; it had no other attraction. Like millions of other young black kids in America, Bates was going to be a professional basketball player or nothing. The odds were perhaps 500,000 to one. When Bates disappeared, Wilson Jackson went to Bates's cousin's house, deep in the back country. There he found the two of them, Bates and his cousin, playing basketball. Coach and player resumed their ongoing argument.

"Boy, what are you going to do with yourself after school?"

"I'm going to play pro ball, coach. I *know* I can make it."

"Boy, before you turn pro you got to turn college first, and before you go to college you got to finish this school right here."

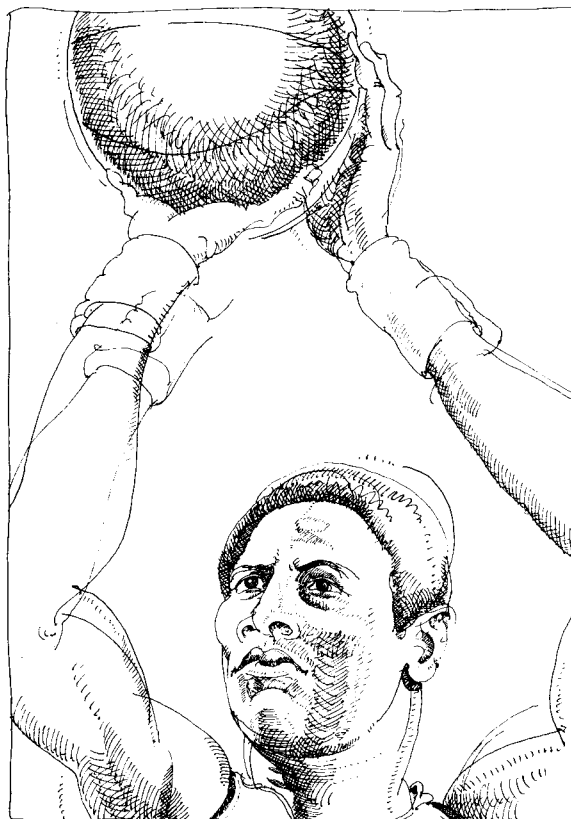
Finally, in desperation, Jackson prevailed on the school authorities to add an extra period of gym to the school schedule, right at the end of the day. The pot sweetened, Bates stayed in school. But he slept through some classes and missed others, and Jackson had to force him to study. In Bates's junior and senior years, Jackson, worried about the drinking, took his star home with him on game days so that he would not drink. Jackson thought that Bates didn't drink all that much, it was just that he wanted people to *think* he had been drinking, that he was a big man. In his senior year, Bates stayed away from booze and averaged 45 points and 21 rebounds. An astonishing number of once all-white colleges, including Ole Miss, applied for his services. Ole Miss would take him as a football player or as a basketball player. Bates seemed to be gravitating toward Jackson State, which was a black sports power only sixty miles away. Wilson Jackson fought the decision. He knew what would happen if Bates went to Jackson State: it was too near home and Bates would play basketball, drift back in the off season to his

old haunts, start drinking and hanging around. Jackson thought Bates ought to get out of Mississippi, and pushed him toward Kentucky State, where he finally enrolled.

He played well at Kentucky State. He was a sure scorer, a powerful, exciting presence on the court; but by the mid-seventies, black schools like Kentucky State, once prime producers of athletes for the NBA, were no longer considered a good source of talent. So many once all-white schools had opened up to blacks, and scouts had become so much better at foraging through the high school circuit, that by the early seventies the best black southern talent was already being spotted in high school, and the better players were going to the best state schools in the Midwest and the South.

States such as Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky, whose black prep stars had migrated to the Big Ten, now fought to keep them in-state, not at some small black school but at the main university. White fans now cheered for blacks, players they had once tried to bar from their colleges. The world of black colleges was being worked by scouts looking for fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-round draft choices. Indeed, if a player was with an all-black college, there was already an unstated judgment against him: the presumption was that he would have been picked up at the high school level if he was any good. That presumption worked against Bates at Kentucky State. Scouts saw the powerful body and the natural instinct for the game. But they looked at his annual statistics and then they asked themselves: Why wasn't he picked by a better college? Is he a bad kid? Is he a head problem? As for the points, who did he get them against? Above all, is he smart enough to learn plays and be part of a disciplined system?

But then he had looked good in the 1978 Portsmouth All-Star game, and he was chosen in the fourth round of the NBA's college draft by an interested but wary Houston. Given the growing odds against him, that wasn't bad. At this juncture, however, Bates, who desperately needed good advice, signed with an agent who told him to hold out for guaranteed money from Houston, and not to report without it. It was the worst advice imaginable for an unknown player from a small black college. In the first place, fourth-round draft choices did not get guaranteed money, and, even more important, Bates's best



chance was simply to go to the camp and *play*. The last thing wanted by any team already ensnared in tedious negotiations with its first- and second-round draft choices, as Houston was, was problems with its *fourth*-round picks. So Bates arrived late at the camp, a camp he could have dominated, and found the place filled with guards holding guaranteed contracts. He immediately showed skill but had trouble with the plays. Tom Nissalke, the coach, was already furious with Bates's agent, and the anger extended to Bates. Soon he was cut. He was hurt but not yet bitter. He was sure that he was better than some of the players on the Houston roster. Deciding that, somehow, he would be back in the NBA, he went to

Bangor, Maine, to play for the

Maine Lumberjacks, of the Continental League.

Bates enjoyed playing in the Continental League. The Maine Lumberjacks were not the Boston Celtics, but it *was* professional basketball, and the dream was just one step away. Sometimes in those games he would go against a player who had once played in the NBA, and then he turned it on; inevitably, he was the stronger player, and the experience encouraged him to believe that he still had a chance. There were, of course, almost always rumors of scouts being in the crowd, and when the rumors circulated, the Continental game, not given to much structure anyway, fell apart. *No one* passed the ball. It wasn't just Bates who was desperate to get to the top, it was everyone in that league. He was rookie of the year in the Continental, and won a slam-dunk contest in the All-Star game. In the summer, he returned to Mississippi, played some ball, worked on construction.

While he was doing this, a man named Don Leventhal, a young Philadelphia basketball junkie who had been a publicity man for the Continental League, was trying in his spare time to put together a team for Philadelphia's summer circuit, the Baker League. Leventhal was as anxious to impress the NBA as any Continental player. He wanted to get into player personnel, and become the next Stu Inman. The Baker, like other outdoor summer leagues, was an almost perfect showcase for black playground players. Pros, college stars, high school stars, and, of course, playground wizards were blended together. No one knew on a given night which famous player might show up. It was the kind of wild, exciting game

that made a purist like Jack Ramsay nervous. Individual artistry triumphed over teamwork. Another casualty was defense. Almost all the players were from the Philadelphia area. Leventhal, who had never seen Bates play but had handled his statistics often, sent a letter to Bates in Goodman, Mississippi, asking if he would like to play in the Baker League. The letter included a form that asked a prospective player to check off which month he preferred to play—June, July, or August. In a week, Bates returned the form, having checked off all three months. Soon Leventhal and Bates were talking on the phone. Bates said he needed money for the bus ride, and Leventhal somewhat nervously lent him \$85 for a ticket. The Philadelphia bus station at 3 A.M. is not the most welcoming place in the world, but Leventhal was there to meet him. Leventhal and a young lawyer named Steve Kauffman tried to explain the complexities of a city to Bates—how to use a bank, how to lease an apartment.

The night after he arrived, Bates scored 29 points in a game. Some of his opponents were professional players. Leventhal and Kauffman worked to get him a professional tryout. Soon Jack McMahon, a veteran white basketball man and former player-coach, now a Philadelphia scout and assistant coach, showed up.

"Billy, this is Mr. Jack McMahon of the Sixers," Leventhal said.

"Mr. McMahon, it's very nice to meet you and I'll try not to disappoint you, sir," Bates answered.

Bates hit his first nine shots and scored 38 points. McMahon, who had signed Darryl Dawkins out of high school, loved Bates. "I've scouted all year and that's the best game by a guard I've seen yet," he told Leventhal.

Philadelphia held a secret pre-draft camp for some of the players they were thinking of drafting. Bates went, and was the best player there. Immediately, the Sixers gave him a \$10,000 bonus and a \$60,000 guaranteed contract for one year. Bates was sure he had made it. So was Leventhal. A week later, in the first round of the NBA draft, Philadelphia drafted Jim Spanarkel, a tall white All-America guard from Duke. Leventhal immediately became apprehensive. Bates did well in the early drills, and sportswriters wrote favorable articles about him in the Philadelphia papers. Then he began to struggle. No one doubted his talent. Jack McMahon was for him, but Chuck Daly, an assistant who had coached at Penn, was dubious. Philadelphia was still smarting from the defeat by Portland two years earlier, and was trying to change the freewheeling nature of its team. The last thing it needed was another one-on-one superstar; it had just gotten rid of Lloyd Free, and no one in the league had been particularly anxious to pick Free up. In camp, Bates looked at Jim Spanarkel, who was white and slow, and thought he could take Spanarkel anywhere he wanted on the court and do with him what he wanted. But Spanarkel was a first-round draft choice, and professional teams were reluctant to admit that they had made mis-

takes with their firsts. In the end, Bates was cut. The last day, he looked long and carefully at Spanarkel, a quiet, reserved young man, and he thought: *I know I'm better than you. I know there are lots of things that you can do better than me, all kinds of things. But this is one thing I know I can do better than you.*

Cut, but still signed to a Philadelphia contract, Bates went back to Bangor. He was bitter about his second failure. He had been given a chance without being given a chance. He was also shrewd enough to know that, in the NBA, being cut a second time was serious, that it became part of your reputation. His coach in Bangor was Mike Uporsky, who had spent the previous season scouting for Seattle, had tried to sell the Sonics on Calvin Natt, and had been let loose by the Sonics. He was himself unhappy about being back in the minor leagues.

"Billy, can you play here?" Uporsky asked him.

"I don't know yet," Bates answered. "My head's so far down it hasn't caught up with my body yet. I don't know if I can spend the rest of my life in the Continental League."

Uporsky had expected Bates to be a smart-ass, a difficult kid who thought he knew more than the coach, but his fears proved unwarranted. Bates was innocent and kind, a great favorite in Bangor, where he spent the entire winter wrapped in a huge sheepskin coat. He could have run for mayor of Bangor, he was so good and gentle with people, so much loved, Uporsky thought. At one point, wary of tampering with the natural quality of Bates's game, Uporsky asked Bates to shoot less and go for six assists a game. "When you're on the court, I want you to think only of sacrificing. We know you can score. Can you do it?"

"I don't know if I can handle it," Bates answered. "There's something in me that's just got to go. I don't know if I can control it." But he tried, and became a good passer.

The Continental League, Uporsky thought, with its small gyms and tiny \$12-a-night motels and cold hamburgers, was like prison for Billy. The team traveled back and forth to games in a huge Winnebago motor home. Midway through the year, Bates got a call from Gene Shue at San Diego. The Clippers were looking for a small forward. Bates went to Philadelphia for a tryout, though Uporsky warned him not to get his hopes up. He did not even play in a full scrimmage, just three-on-three. He never heard from the Clippers again.

BY MID-FEBRUARY OF 1980, THE PORTLAND GUARD situation was desperate. Lionel Hollins was gone; Dave Twardzik, the other lead guard, was playing with a body exhausted by injuries. His legs, said Ron Culp, the team's trainer, were dead. Anytime Twardzik played more than 20 minutes in a game, he paid for it the rest of the week. Ramsay had lost confidence in

T. R. Dunn, the muscular second-year man. Ron Brewer, who had started the season so strongly, had lost confidence in himself. Jim Paxson, the first-round draft choice from Dayton whom Inman had been so high on, was playing erratically, a disappointment to himself and to Ramsay. His court vision and intelligence were excellent, but he had been drafted as a shooter and he was shooting poorly. Because of all the other injuries, he was getting an exceptional chance to play and he was doing very little with it. Midway through the season, Ramsay had begun to wonder if Paxson, the product of a secure middle-class home, the son of a former professional player who had given up the sport to take over a successful life-insurance business, was tough enough to play in the NBA. He never contested the referee's calls, never seemed to fight back. Ramsay was convinced that one thing common to all superior professional athletes was a certain meanness or toughness, whichever you wanted to call it, a desire to leave their mark on opponents. Maybe Paxson lacked that. He might be too stable for the league.

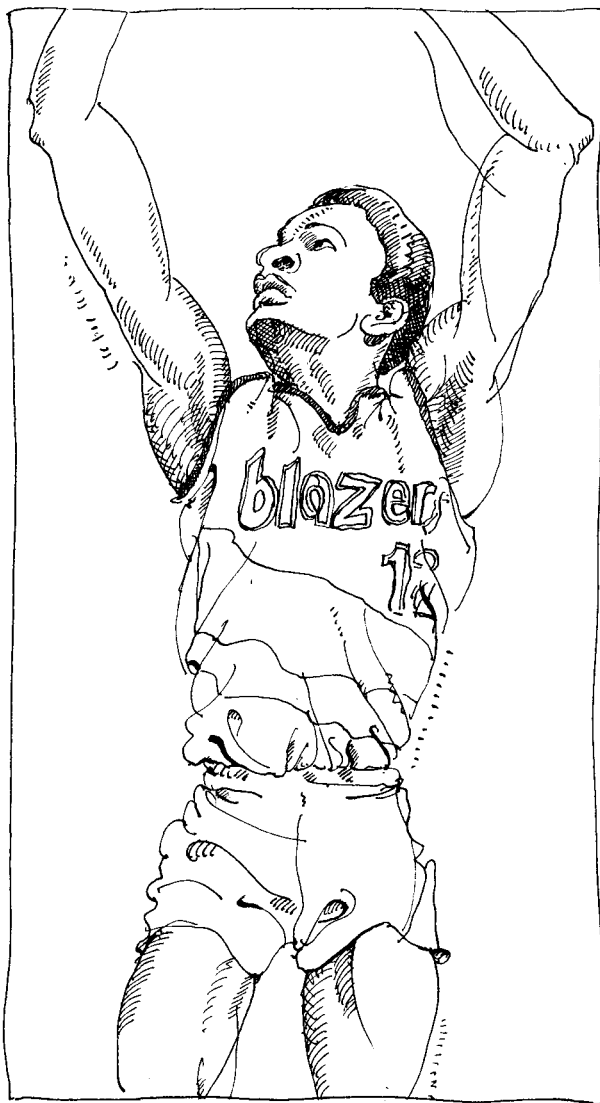
In early February, before Buckwalter began to push for Bates, Inman was scouting the Continental League for a big man. But he was also looking at guards. Inman, once a star of the San Jose Spartans and a connoisseur of offbeat team nicknames, loved the idea of the Maine *Lumberjacks*. He went to Hawaii to watch the Volcanoes against the Lumberjacks. There he could see Stan Eckwood, whom he had liked from the previous draft, and Billy Ray Bates. By the time Inman caught up with the Lumberjacks in Hawaii, Uporsky had been fired, replaced by the owner's son, who coached only home games. That fact, the flakiness of it, excited Inman even more.

"What kind of plays do you run?" Inman asked Bates and Eckwood before the game.

"Oh, we don't run plays," Bates answered. "We just take the ball down and shake and bake a little."

"Well," said Inman, "what do you talk about before a game?"

"Where we're going after the game," said Eckwood.



Inman watched Bates and liked him. The power in the body was evident, the hands were huge, and Bates could, in Inman's coach-talk, "pass for profit in heavy traffic—a big plus." But Bates had something extra, something that could be neither studied nor taught, and that was an instinct for the game. It was something you were born with. Intrigued, Inman located Uporsky in Arizona. They had similar tastes. As scouts, both had wanted Calvin Natt. Uporsky had even admired Seattle's other first-round draft pick that year, Jimmy Paxson. "Mike, is he the best in your league?" Inman asked.

"Stu, he may be the best in *your* league," Uporsky said. "Only Paul Westphal has more natural ability. I'd get him on a plane before anyone else finds out."

Inman watched two games in Honolulu and then followed the Lumberjacks to Alaska to watch them against the Anchorage Northern Knights. He took Bates to lunch. When they reached the restaurant, Bates was surrounded by kids,

signing autographs, asking each if he or she was going to the game that night. Inman liked that. "If I were your best friend," Inman told Bates at lunch, "I would tell you that what you're in now is the worst environment I can imagine for you. No coaching, no plays, no discipline. You're blessed with great skills, Billy, and you've got a great body. No one can teach you to shoot like that or jump like that. But there's a thousand players like you all over the country in the Rucker and the Baker and a hundred other leagues. Every city has them and they're talented and they watch some pro game and they think, 'Hey, I'm better than the pros.' Maybe they can do one little thing better, go to the hoop, dunk. But that's not basketball. Can they play in a team? Can they play in harmony with four other players? I think you can, but you've got to be able to want to do it. We want to sign you, Billy. Do you know who Coach Ramsay is?"

"I've seen him. Gets angry at referees a lot," Bates remarked.

"He can teach you how to see your teammates, he can help you. Do you want to try it?"

"Yes, sir," said Bates. "I want to play in the NBA more than anything else in the world."

So it was that Billy Ray Bates, in February of 1980, the season three-quarters gone, joined the Portland Trail Blazers.

Among those in Portland who did not seem especially elated by his arrival was Jack Ramsay. He had not been impressed by Buckwalter's original recommendation, and he had no great yearning for a player whose skills were apparently so different from those he sought. The last thing he wanted this late in the season was an untutored kid who had never played in a system. When he talked of Bates it was as if he were talking of an outsider, someone who was not really on the team. Other NBA coaches and general managers, most of whom knew a good deal about Bates's reputation and even more about Jack Ramsay's system, were amused at the idea of Dr. Jack Ramsay trying to coach Billy Ray Bates.

But the Blazers had already changed. Their treasured small forward, Calvin Natt, had come at a high price; one day he might be an exceptional player for Ramsay's system, but he was not ready yet. Natt was a rookie with his second team in one year. He did not know the plays. Some wondered whether he was the right man for the position.



THE CROSSING

To find, across the bridge of night,
one constant voice urging you over,
telling you where the loose stones are,
where the missing beam, you must
be willing to risk that journey
with your eyes blindfolded, your hands
in gloves. You must believe that close
on the other side is a room
prepared only for you. There a small
blue lamp will be shining, and books
piled on the table, ones you've
longed for, but nearly forgot.
All the while you're crossing, feet
hesitant and chilled, you must imagine
a high four-postered bed, layers
of quilts, that voice becomes a murmur,
the river at your back.

—Susan Ludvigson

He was an immensely powerful young man, perhaps the strongest player at the position in the league, but was he the quick, deft passer for the Ramsay system? Or was he a power forward, a hardworking player, but not supple enough for the position? He was not as good a passer as Bobby Gross, and his game was power, and one-on-one moves. When the ball came to him, it rarely went to anyone else; his presence altered the ball's flow, sometimes stopped it. Calvin Natt, it soon became clear, was not exactly the player they needed. If he was to be effective, it would be on a very different team.

WHEN BILLY RAY BATES ARRIVED IN PORTLAND, NO one knew what was just beneath the surface, and that was troubling; if he became successful, would he change? Would he start arguing with Ramsay for more playing time, talking about being traded, swaggering? For the moment, he was completely unspoiled and grateful to be there. In his first road game, he dressed for the game Lumberjack style—that is, he changed at the hotel. He arrived for the bus in his warm-up clothes, while the others were still in their civilian finery. That amused them.

At first, Ramsay did not use him very much—perhaps for a few minutes, late, in games already gone. But word about him spread throughout the league, and crowds began to gather around the baseline to watch his dunks. Finally, Ramsay used him because he had no one else and because his team was playing so poorly. They were struggling for the last spot in the Western Conference playoffs, slightly behind San Diego, and they were playing listlessly. They went to Milwaukee with only nine games left in the season, with competition for the last play-off spot more and more heated.

Midway in the third quarter of the Milwaukee game, the Bucks were up 85-59 points. Ramsay went to Bates and Abdul Jeelani, the one a very recent veteran of the Continental League, the other a veteran of the Italian League. Both of them were, at their best, freelancers, clumsy in a system, strong in games where nothing else worked. They brought the Blazers back. Bates had 14 points in 15 minutes, Jeelani 16 points in 15 minutes. The score was 98-93 with 7:49 left. Ramsay sent in his regular lineup. The Blazers collapsed.

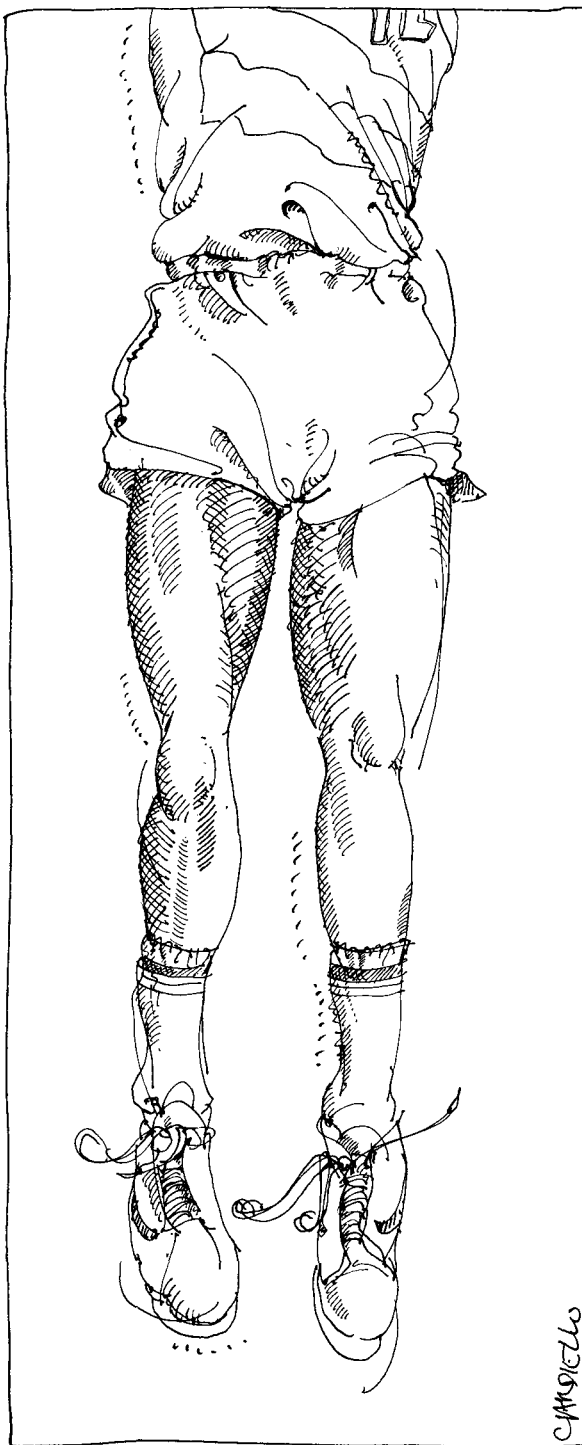
The next night, in Chicago, the game was slow, heavy; everyone, it seemed, was worn out by the long season. Watching his team play against Artis Gilmore, knowing exactly what it should be doing, Ramsay was enraged to see the Blazers walking through their assignments, giving Gilmore position close to the basket again and again. With 5 minutes left in the third quarter, Chicago was ahead by 17 points. In came Bates and Jeelani. In the final 17 minutes, the two of them, freelancing and gunning, playing with enthusiasm and excitement, combined for 43 points. Bates simply took over the game. When he

had the ball, it was as if everyone on the court stopped to watch him. He drove to the basket and scored, then did it again. Chicago changed defensive guards, and still he did it. Then they began to drop off him, conceding the jump shot to stop the drive. Immediately, he started hitting jump shots. With Portland behind by 2 points, everyone cleared out so he could drive on the immense Artis Gilmore. He took off, drove, jumped, faked, brought Gilmore up with him, pumped again, still held the ball, and then, at the last second, dunked. The Chicago arena broke into applause. In the end Portland, playing sloppy defense, let Gilmore hit two easy shots from the inside, and Chicago won. As Bates walked off the court, the Chicago announcer said: "Billy Ray Bates scored 26 points." He paused. The Chicago crowd began to applaud. "Sixteen of them in the last quarter." The noise was deafening.

The locker room, except for a crowd of reporters around Bates, was grim. They had done a terrible job on Gilmore. "You don't stop Artis once he has the ball," Buckwalter was saying. "You prevent him from getting it where he wants. Otherwise he'll score all night. He's too damn strong." Gilmore had 11 of 14, all short, easy shots. The coaches had diagrammed exactly what they wanted done, and nothing had happened. Ramsay was trying to deal with the Chicago reporters. He hated losing so close a game after so exceptional a comeback. Right now, it didn't matter that an un-Ramsay-like manner of play had brought them back.

In a corner, a Chicago reporter was interviewing Bates. "Billy, how would *you* play defense against Billy Ray Bates?"

"Well, you know," said Bates, "I can go to the hoop and I can shoot outside. How do you play defense against me? Hard to say, hard to say."



Four nights later, the Blazers went to Oakland for an important game with Golden State. Only six games were left in the season after this. San Diego was faltering too. The Portland bus reached the Oakland Coliseum around 5 P.M. While the other players waited in the locker room, taking their time getting dressed (there was, after all, always too much time before a game), Bates dressed and walked out into the empty arena and began shooting baskets. Bucky Buckwalter, walking through the arena, saw him there, a distant, lonely figure practicing in a huge darkened room before empty seats. He stopped and watched Bates for a few minutes, suddenly realizing that this moment was devoted not so much to improving Bates's touch as to reconnecting him with reality, proving to himself that it was all true, that he was finally playing in the NBA. That night, Ramsay went to Bates much earlier than usual. Bates scored 22 points and helped send the game into overtime, which Portland won. Afterward, reporters asked him about a key play in which he had driven to the basket and scored.

"Well, I knew I could beat the old guy," he said.

"What old guy?" a reporter asked.

"You know, the old guy who used to play for Boston," he said. Thus did Billy Ray Bates

describe Jo Jo White, one of basketball's great stars, then all of thirty-three years old.

Bates was a star now. The NBA made him its player of the week. People wanted him to endorse their sneakers. Writers continued to seek him out. On the flight home from Golden State, he took aside a writer who had interviewed him two weeks earlier, when he had first arrived in the league. "You going to write all of that, aren't you?" he said. "Write all of what?" the reporter asked. "All of what I told you about growing up, about how we had no

electricity and no indoor plumbing." The writer said yes, he was going to write it. "That means everywhere I go in the NBA and every time I'm on television, people going to look at me and think of me going to the bathroom outdoors and growing up without electricity. They're going to think about it." He thought for a moment. "They're going to think about Billy Bates out there in that old shack."

In Portland, Bates was featured on Bill Schonely's post-game radio show. "How could it have happened so quickly, Billy Ray?" Schonely asked. "I guess I was just born to play basketball," he answered, as modestly as he could. Because of him, Portland, which had been floundering, made the first round of the play-offs against a strong Seattle team. Seattle won the first game at home; by the second game in Portland, CBS had staked out Bates's locker for a TV special on him, and Brent Musburger, the announcer, had a nickname ready: "The Legend." In the second game Bates hit an eighteen-foot-jump shot with 5 seconds left to send the game into overtime. Portland won, but Seattle destroyed the Blazers in the decisive third game of the series.

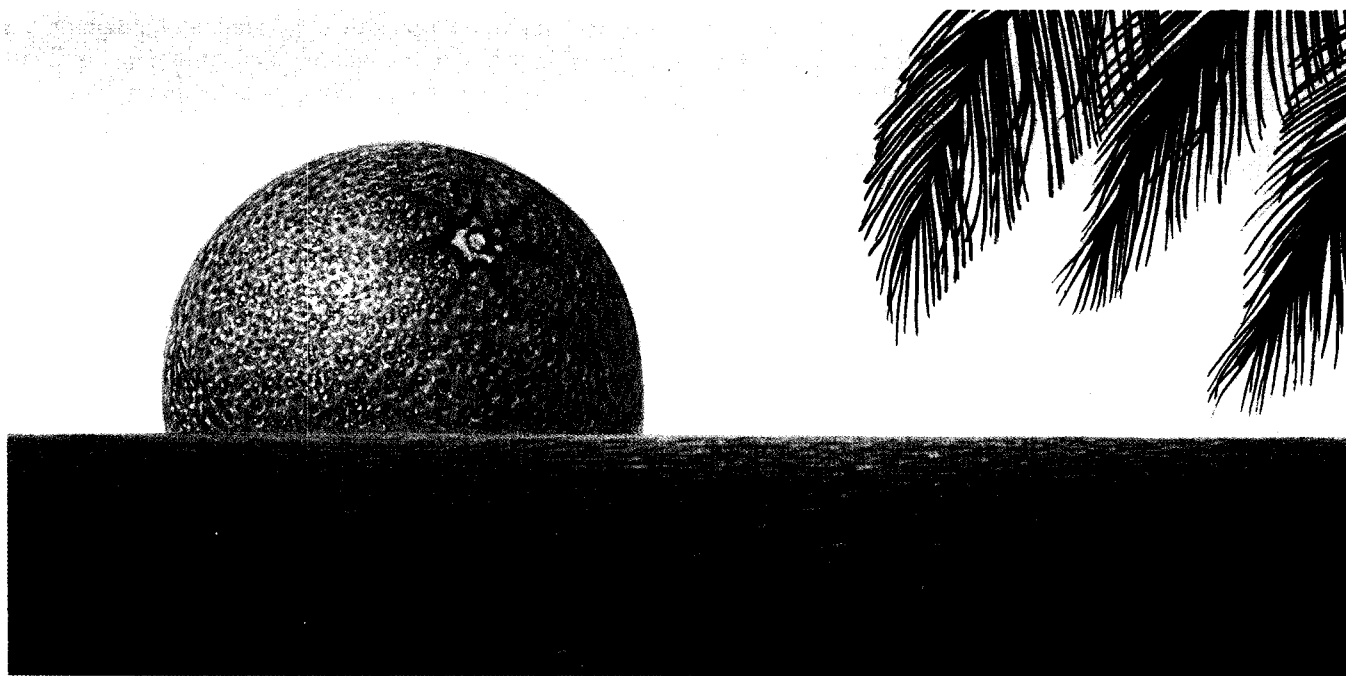
During the off season, Jack Ramsay, once a doubter, became a full-fledged convert. Bates, he decided, was as single-minded about basketball as his coach was. When Ramsay talked about Bates now, he beamed; he spoke of how coachable he was, how eager to learn. There was nothing, Ramsay said, that could not be done with him. Stu Inman was more cautious in his appraisal; he worried more about Bates's adjustment to the social pressure of playing in the league. In two years, one front-office man said, Bates could be out of the league—or an All-Star. It was impossible to tell. Bates's second season for Portland, 1980–1981, started erratically for him, as it did for the Blazers. Ramsay was careful in his use of Bates; he was wary of putting too much pressure on him, and he preferred to bring him off the bench. Gradually, however, as Kelvin Ransey, the rookie lead guard, flowered, so too did the Blazers, and Bates. Ransey seemed to give Bates the larger court vision he badly needed. Coming off the bench for 20 minutes a game, Bates still managed to average 13.8 points, fourth highest on the team.

Still the coaches and his teammates worried about him. He was less sophisticated than many of his teammates, and his coaches worried that he was alone far too often on the road. Some players tried to bridge the gap, but it was not easy. Bates seemed to have a need for sycophants, a need to prove that he was a big man, to buy drinks for the entire house at a bar, or to leave a huge tip. This did not bode well for the future. Bates was aware of the problem, and at times he talked plaintively with the coaches and his lawyer about the pressures on him, about, for example, how hard it was for him to go home. When he went home, old friends borrowed money, often hun-

dreds of dollars, and they did not seem anxious to pay it back. He said he did not know what to do. He still planned to build a house for his mother, but he had not yet gotten around to it.

In Portland he was something of a folk hero. Every young child in Portland had a Billy Ray Bates autograph and seemed to know Bates personally. When other teams call the Portland front office to ask if Bates might be available in a trade, the Blazer people say no, that fan reaction would be too violent. In recognition of his popularity and his contributions, Portland, last spring, did something that it had been unwilling to do in the past for other players: it quietly rewrote Bates's contract. Though the deal was called an extension, others familiar with it regarded it as a renegotiation, for the money in the years already covered by Bates's existing contract immediately grew bigger. Bates was pleased by the contract. Portland also showed exceptional sensitivity in handling him. At the urging of both Inman and Ramsay, Bates attended a special remedial reading class in Portland. To the joy of the people who ran the school, Bates, the most celebrated student the school had ever had, was willing to talk publicly about his inability to read, about the social problems it caused him, and about how he had managed to fool people in the past by reading a key word or two from a paper, but never an entire paragraph or a book. "Now I'm saying to myself," he told a reporter, "Billy Ray, don't play dumb. You gotta wake up and find out who Billy Ray Bates is." The root of his problem, he said, was growing up in Mississippi, where black people did not read because they did not need to read, but used a very limited number of words with varying inflections. "People there speak with soul feeling," he said, "soul words. Common words, but used in a very influenced way." His problem, he said, was always with big words. To demonstrate, he picked up a pamphlet and showed the words he could read, and the longer ones he had trouble with. The pamphlet was the press guide for the Phoenix Suns. "See," he said, "I have trouble with a word like this." He pointed to a big word. The word was "Auerbach."

Bucky Buckwalter, the assistant coach who pushed the Blazers to sign Bates, is delighted by his success. At times, during games, as he watched Bates move through the air, he felt a genuine awe that someone so untutored could do things that he, a serious student of the game, had never been able to do. If I were a player today, Buckwalter thought, that's who I would want to be. At the end of the 1981 season, Portland signed Jimmy Lynam, a college coach from Ramsay's old school, St. Joseph's in Philadelphia, as an assistant coach. Buckwalter, still an assistant coach, became chief scout as well. That pleased him, for it meant that he would be able to spend more time in the seedy subculture of college basketball. And perhaps he'd find another Billy Ray Bates. □



HEARTBEAT

A SHORT STORY BY LINDA SVENDSEN

I MET BILL WHEN I WAS STUDYING URBAN ANTHROPOLOGY at Hunter. He was studying galaxies. I loved him for his vision and ability to see the distance; I wasn't sure what he saw in me. After living together for eight months, we seldom enjoyed the peace or lust we'd known before splitting the rent.

One night in April, when Bill and I fought about his long hours spent sitting in a topless bar, I gathered all the fruit in our apartment. Anything juicy, easily bruised: apples, bananas, a lemon. I threatened to quit college and spend nights at International House until I could find a ride and return to Canada.

"Why are you taking all the fruit, Adele?" Bill sat at the kitchen table, his feet propped on a chair. He wore sweat pants, a turtleneck, and a fuzzy toque, all of which kept him warm on cold evenings. A biography of Galileo was open on his lap. Bill looked reliable: a man for home and yard.

"In case I get hungry. It's a long drive north," I said.

"I don't believe you."

"I don't care."

The truth was, Bill and I often shared fruit after mak-

ing love, and I didn't want him sharing this intimacy with anybody else. I could imagine myself skulking away and another woman arriving. They'd make rigorous New York love and, afterward, Bill might feed her the firm Bings we'd so carefully picked. (Even though cherries were scarce, my imagination easily supplied them.) Or they'd share a plush wedge of watermelon and she'd spit the little black seeds onto his stomach in her casual way, aiming for his belly button, missing. Incautious, they'd nibble the white on the rind. He'd never notice my absence.

"Why aren't you packing your underwear? Or a toothbrush?"

"Because, Bill." I tossed an apple from one hand to the other. "I don't want you eating any of it with anybody else."

Bill looked down at his lap, then back at me. He seemed very tired. "Please trust me," he said.

I closed the door behind me and intended to walk into the night. I ended up in the communal laundry down the hall. Nobody else was there; it was after midnight. I sat cross-legged on a dryer and listened for the reassuring scuff of his flip-flops along the corridor. But heard only soft laughter, the striking of a match, from somebody else's rooms.

Linda Svendsen is at present a fellow at Radcliffe's Bunting Institute.

I bit into the apples and chewed faces: eyes and lips of red peel, oddly pared smiles. I watched the pulp surrounding these strange features turn brown. Then I went back.

Bill still sat at the table. His book was turned to the same page. "Come sit on my knee, Adele," he said, and I did.

When my mother and stepfather called long-distance, the next morning, to invite us to join them in Florida, Bill and I had made old promises again and were toasting bread for BLTs.

They believed it was the best graduation gift they could offer—two weeks with the three most important people in my life in a state I'd never visited. Their other reasons: I deserved a holiday after college, before the future; they hadn't seen me in ages. In other words, they hadn't ever seen my boyfriend, Bill. Except in snaps.

From my chattering letters, they didn't guess that Bill and I argued definitions of fidelity. They knew about the weekend jaunt to Martha's Vineyard, how it hadn't rained, how we steamed our own mussels on the beach facing Chappaquiddick, and paced widow's walks. They didn't know about our real life, and how I worried that Bill was meeting a lover at the library near certain call numbers. Or how pensive I was when he danced salsa, two songs in a row, with the ecstatically married secretary of the Astronomy Department.

What they didn't know wouldn't hurt them. Sometimes I was sure Bill thought that about me. I hoped Florida would effect a cure: the sun and sleep and privacy.

MY MOTHER AND BILL BURNED ON THE VERY FIRST morning. Bonded, they compared noses, shoulders, and kneecaps, and trudged back to the rooms for cold tea bags. "Takes the sting out, Bill," my mother said.

My stepfather, Robert, and I continued to tan silently on the beach; the scent of coconut hung like a net. I listened to the Gulf of Mexico and heard children shouting, angrily, far away. I stretched in the direction of Texas.

"So." Robert's voice seemed to come from nowhere, from the Gulf. "Bill studied astronomy."

"That's right."

"And what's he going to pursue?"

I considered answers. Then chose to say, "Research. He wrote his final paper on asteroids and the atmosphere."

He didn't say anything for a while. I glanced at him, and he was staring out at the water, and I saw, from the angle of his head, that he was watching a small trawler.

"So he's serious about space, eh?"

"Yes."

He nodded, then looked at me. "You should turn."

I shifted onto my stomach, and felt the cool wind brush my back and legs. The conversation seemed over; Robert

decided to go into the water. He shuffled his feet in the shallow depths to intimidate any drowsing devilfish. Then he started a strong crawl toward some point he had fixed upon.

Later that afternoon, the four of us drove in a rented car to the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The car smelled of Noxzema and Robert's skin bracer. Too late for the escorted tour, we drove miles on dirt roads through mangroves, stopping at outlooks.

"What are we looking for?" my mother demanded. "There's a bird," she said, pointing at the sky.

My stepfather, wearing binoculars and a movie camera, read all the signs. "There are alligators here."

"I'm waiting in the car," my mother said, then vanished. I heard her call from a rolled-down window, "Watch where you're going, Adele."

We explored the swamp for almost half an hour. Every alligator we discovered was a drifting stick. But Bill spotted eleven geckos, and we saw a spoonbill grubbing under a gumbo-limbo tree.

Tired and hot, I hiked back to the car.

"This will cool you off," my mother said, turning on the air-conditioning.

"Do you think Bill is having fun?"

"He's having a great time," I said.

"Are you?"

"I'm having a wonderful time, Mum. I like Sanibel."

And I was having a wonderful time. After a dinner of lobster and key lime pie, we noticed children roller skating near the restaurant. They wore hats of straw and waved sparklers. A boy in a Scout uniform passed one to Bill, who lit it and spelled my name against the night. I watched the letters disappear, each before the fiery completion of the next.

Our bedroom was only an earlobe away from my parents', and this embarrassed us. We tried not to leave the living room at the same time, hoping staggered departures would conceal our eagerness. I stood, then my mother stood and invented a yawn, and we both said good night. Bill lingered with Robert and water-polo highlights on television.

In our bathroom, I washed and approved my tan lines in the mirror. Then I started a mystery on top of the fresh sheets. I heard the announcer chanting penalties in the other room, Robert's and Bill's polite murmurs. I heard the waves, only inches outside the window. I wanted to throw a rock into the dark and hear how ominously close it would splash.

Bill came in. He slipped out of his cutoffs and pulled me down beside him on the bed. "All right," he whispered. "Let's play Scrabble." He folded my page corner. "Let's play Go."

We laughed and, as it turned out, didn't play anything. His skin was very sensitive. But I rubbed him with salve and he gripped my toes in his hand and named some after stars: Sirius, the dog-toe, Nova-toe, and White Dwarf.

THE DAY BEFORE LEAVING THE ISLAND, WE CROSSED the causeway at Punta Rassa and drove to Fort Myers. Robert wanted to exchange the Cougar, because its tires were dangerously bald. This done, we stopped for lunch and discussed doing something else on the mainland. I mentioned the swimsuit factory; Bill, the giant water slide. My stepfather announced we'd visit Edison's winter home.

Our guide was Naomi, from Land's End. She wasn't beautiful, but her English accent was charming. She said "spot of trouble," "bloody awful nights in the laboratory," and "a wee bit fou." Her skirt was polka-dotted and above her knees, and she told the group she respected scientific methods. I felt Bill smile.

My parents confided in her immediately, saying "us three"—indicating themselves and me—were Canadian. They said we were in the Commonwealth together with her, and shared the same constitution. She shook hands with them, but looked at Bill and asked where he was from.

"New York," he said. "The city."

We strolled through Edison's botanical gardens and learned about banyan trees, their roots dropping from the sky, tall bamboo, and goldenrod. Naomi showed us Mrs. Edison's walk, with flagstones donated by Ford and Firestone. We saw the swimming pool of Portland cement. We heard about Edison spitting on the floor, Edison sleeping standing up, Edison proposing to his second bride in Morse code.

Bill kept Naomi's pace, and asked questions. She cited Edison's experiments to increase the life of the light bulb, his efforts at submarine detection. They seemed to be enjoying history.

I imagined them together. I was no longer slowly measuring my parents' steps and inspecting grounds. I saw Bill and Naomi in Cornwall: the cottage with a thatched roof; smoke circling the chimney; Naomi in a scanty apron, and nothing else, near the hob. They'd sip Guinness and eat shepherd's pie together under quilts.

She would be a better lover than I. The way she enunciated vowels and consonants, her choice of verbs, the way she moved her mouth, were proof. She would call him different names at night, names he'd never heard before. She'd kneel and say Beast, Master William.

My mother touched my shoulder. "Are you all right?" "I'm fine."

"Why don't you go up there with Bill? You're missing the talk."

"I can hear," I said. "I'm not missing anything."

Bill turned and waved, urging me closer to him and Naomi and the rest of the engrossed crowd. I shook my head and gestured toward my mother. "No," I mouthed.

By the time we entered Edison's laboratory, I hadn't pictured their children, but had named them: Clarissa and Cyril and little Daphne. Even Robert had remarked upon the friendliness of the British. Bill and Naomi were

at the front of the group, and when she stopped to comment on exhibits, Bill gave all his attention. I stared at him and willed another glance backward to where I stood with my parents.

Finally I walked away. I said something to Robert, "Sunstroke," maybe, and started running down the narrow aisle past Edison's sockets, fuses, and primitive telegraphs. I passed a model of the Black Maria. I ran by the glow of incandescent light and then was outside.

IN THE CAR ON THE WAY BACK, BILL MARVELED AT EDISON. The phonograph and the deaf man: how the subtleties of music escaped him, but not sound. My mother agreed that Edison was brilliant and wondered which Canadian could match him. Robert suggested that Canada was known more for humanitarians than for inventors. Then he asked if we should buy ice for my head.

That evening my parents played marathon croquet on a torchlit lawn.

"At last alone," Bill said.

We ate on the balcony, a supper of tossed greens, and admired our sixth sunset. Bill perched on a pillow and I leaned backward against his chest. He twisted my hair into two ponytails and tied them with strips that usually secured celery.

"The sun sinks faster here," I said.

"Seems to."

"Is that because we're near the equator?"

"I can't remember."

"I always forget that the sun never sets." I turned to look up at Bill. "That it's the earth turning away from the sun."

He rested his chin on my head and placed his arms, light as sleeves, over mine. "Still a 'jolly good show' for free."

Hours later we were still arguing.

"Where do you get these ideas?"

"You!" I yelled.

"I asked you to move up."

"You didn't want me to."

"Next time I'll send a wire."

"Look," I said firmly. "You liked her."

"Smiling doesn't mean I want to lay somebody. I've told you this before."

"You're a liar," I said.

Bill grabbed my hair. I was pulled onto my feet and backward into our bedroom. When he finally let go, I scrambled toward the closest wall and faced it. I was ashamed that the two of us—joyous wrestlers during sex—were now fighting deliberately to hurt. I thought of pets, confused by the familiar hand that feeds, strokes, then unexpectedly slaps.

"I don't know what to do, Adele." Bill sounded serious and sad. "I don't know how to make you believe me." I knew he was looking at me, waiting; then he went out.

I lay down on the bed and closed my eyes.
When my parents returned, after one, Bill was huddled on the balcony.

"Is he watching for satellites?"

"I doubt it," Robert said.

"Is he asleep?" I heard my mother open the sliding door. "Bill?"

"Maybe he's in the doghouse," Robert said.

They didn't say anything for seconds, and I guessed the exchange. My mother's referential eyes.

I suddenly heard Bill say hello, who won, too bad, good night. He came into our room without flipping on the lamp.

"Adele?"

I didn't answer.

"I think we should talk about giving notice when we get home. I don't know what's keeping us together anymore."

Next door, my parents undressed. I listened to the scrape of hangers in their closet and I heard them complain about their scores. I heard our names spoken, more than once.

WE DIVIDED FLORIDA BY EAST AND WEST. THE SECOND and last reservation was at a Fort Lauderdale motel on North Atlantic Boulevard, the east coast. Robert told us we were now off-season, and rates were very reasonable.

The trip across Alligator Alley, Route 84, took five dull hours. Robert asked Bill if he cared to drive; he was delighted to, and my mother assumed his place in the back with me. Bill and I had barely spoken to each other over poached eggs, so it was doubtful we could have maintained enough back-seat small talk to amuse my parents, or fool them.

My mother talked about the tournament the night before, how hustlers had tampered with the mallets. "Nothing's sacred anymore," she said. "What did you two do last night?"

"Nothing, Mum."

"You both took it easy?"

"Yes. We ate supper and watched the sun go down." I looked out the window at a truck speeding in the other direction. It carried long palm trees, adults, on their sides. "Did you see that?"

"What?"

Bill braked needlessly and often. When a pelican swooped across the road, he applied his foot. When a car signaled left, station wagons away, Robert had to grip the dashboard. "I'm not used to power brakes," Bill said.

I noticed his strong hands on the wheel, and remembered my scalp, how it had stung.

"So these are everglades!" Robert said.

The land was flat, the slash pines short and not exotic.

It occurred to me that we might be in a different hemisphere, that we'd ventured farther south than intended. Nobody lived there: no undershirts stiff on washlines; no dogs on porches, dead in sleep. Nothing to joke about or judge. But there were tourist attractions—six, three, one mile ahead.

"Do you want to go on an airboat?" Robert asked.

"Not really," I said. "Bill, do you?"

He resisted looking at me in the rearview mirror. "Doesn't matter." He glanced at Robert. "But if you and June want to?"

"I'm not getting my feet wet," my mother said.

"Who knows when we'll be down here again." Robert



MOUNTAIN MUSIC

Chain Saw Couplets

With a fine rat-tail I file
the cusps of your hooked teeth;

I dig the lowland oakdust
out of the sprocket cover;

funnel the fuel and chain oil
into your small tanks; wind

the starter cord, now I yank it,
you stammer and then chatter

your rapport with all construction
machines, the sharp chain spinning

that could chew my foot off; steadied,
I start us slicing white rounds

to fill my lampblack fireplace
with whispers, murmurs, soft puffs

that die to cinders, embers,
white ash to shovel under

the forest floor. September.
Even the days grow kinder.

—John Ridland

folded a map of the southeastern states. "Probably never."

I realized that Bill and I were casting a pall over their trip.

The new suite, decorated in an avian motif, had only one bedroom, and my parents claimed it. Bill opened the couch in the combination kitchen, hallway, living room. I found the linen, shook pillowcases spattered with parrots, and tucked in a blanket of faded blue wings and beaks.

"One more week," said Bill, not conversationally.

"That's right," I said. "Seven days."

BILL'S YOUNGER BROTHER, DONNIE, WORKED SUMMERS at the Magic Kingdom, in Orlando. Bill had written him from New York, listing dates and addresses, and he arrived before brunch on the third day of gloom at Fort Lauderdale. My mother noticed his face, and thought he'd been in a motorcycle accident.

"I know," he said. "I stayed too long under the sunlamp." The skin was blistered and peeling; his swollen nose threatened his upper lip.

My parents loved him. He was familiar with Canadian sports and talked curling with Robert; he sliced crudités for my mother; he was fun. They invited Donnie to stay as long as he wished. And Bill and I were, if not congenial, more considerate of each other with the buffer of his company.

While Bill soaked in the bathtub, Donnie and I talked on a shaded patio and identified hookers pouting on the sidewalk. I picked out two.

"Three," Donnie said.

"Two."

"I'm not kidding, Adele."

"I'm not kidding either, kid. Look at her bag." I'd heard that prostitutes favor purses the size of chipmunks.

"She is."

"I'm not going to ask how you can tell." I loved Donnie too. He was shorter than Bill, more muscular, more fair. He'd once knotted a cashmere sock around Bill's neck when he was suffering from a sore throat. He'd knocked out a college buddy who killed some dragonflies in the microwave for kicks.

I wanted to ask him about Bill. But Donnie was young; he still believed in the rewards of a suntan. I couldn't burden him.

Bill, in a white motel towel, called from the door, and we tiptoed back to the room over hot concrete. Donnie bent to pluck the bottom leaf off a shrub.

"What's that?" I asked.

"Aloe." He straightened and showed me the lance-shaped shoot. "The juice is good for insect bites, rashes, burns—I'm going to use it on my face."

"You're an optimist." I hopped on one singed foot, then the other.

"Not really," he said. "Everything gets better eventually, anyway."

"That's optimistic," I said.

"Things can only get better. Right?" He held the aloe to his nose.

"Right."

"Some things get better faster if you just let them be." Donnie went on to describe the quick knitting of a kitten's broken leg, and how the vet had never been near it.

That night I encouraged Bill and Donnie to go out alone. "I'm going to stay here and write letters," I said. I also thought it would be a chance for them to talk and possibly review my virtues.

Bill kissed me on the top of my head.

They said they wouldn't be late.

BY THREE THEY WEREN'T BACK, AND I MADE A tarot spread of postcards on the coffee table. I asked the cards whether I should stoop to follow. A fisherman hugging a marlin, deep-sea charter boat boldly advertised behind him, pointed into my past; a lady water-skier, wearing a bikini the color of bright persimmons, crowned me; a pale and bored flamingo anticipated my future; the final outcome was oranges. This card appeared twice. I couldn't fight the provocation of fruit. I borrowed Bill's kangaroo jacket and pulled up the hood.

The first bar I checked had held a wet-nightgown contest earlier in the evening. The runners-up, in baby dolls and lace, still drank. The jukebox played Lesley Gore and they shouted the chorus, "It's my party and I'll cry if I want to." I ordered a Florida Key and, strangely, relaxed. I'd intended to be thorough: I was going to case every club, pizza nook, and parked car on the North Atlantic strip and catch them at seduction. But as I watched the other women swaying in flannels and satin, I recalled slumber parties where my girlfriends had been accomplices in love: giving advice, keeping secrets. For a while, I forgot about Bill and the woman he was probably with.

A tractor driver from Gainesville introduced himself and offered me the world.

"Thank you anyway," I said.

On the way back, I passed unlit motels. I walked around a few courtyards and parking lots and counted room numbers. I wanted to pause and listen by each dark window, expecting to hear panting in a rhythm I would recognize. As if expecting to hear my own name in another's whispered.

When I unlocked the door in daylight, at our place, they were both dressed and asleep on the opened couch. Donnie wore one thin moccasin. I slipped it off, spilling sand on the blanket. I nudged Bill. He moved closer to the middle; I accepted his warm edge.

“THERE WAS A FULL MOON LAST NIGHT.” DONNIE talked softly.
 “I know.”

“Bill and I got sick of bars and walked on the beach.”

“That’s romantic,” I said. “What time was that?”

“About three.”

Donnie, Bill, and I were in bed. It was early morning, and I’d brewed coffee to lure us into the day. Bill still slept between us.

“We were across from the Crab Shack when Bill spotted something floating on the tide.” He sipped his coffee. “It was a turtle. With a shell three feet wide.”

“That’s big.”

“She crawled onto the beach and started digging a hole with her back flippers.”

“Laying eggs,” I said, and wished I’d been there.

“Right.” Donnie was impressed. “But we weren’t sure. We’d heard about whales beaching themselves, dying, so Bill ran to a phone and called the SPCA.”

“And they came?”

“Eventually. We’d already watched her lay the eggs and drag back to the ocean. She was incredibly weak.” Donnie looked at Bill, his eyes slightly open even in sleep. “He called her ‘Mama.’ ‘Come on, Mama,’ he said. ‘You can make it, little Mama.’ I thought he was going to pick her up and carry her.”

I ran a finger along Bill’s shoulder, over the slope and along the arm, until I reached his matching finger, its nail and tip. I wanted to cry for that gentle side of him I’d missed.

“We showed the Turtle Patrol—they’re the ones who came—where the eggs were buried, and they took them for incubation. They should be turtles in sixty days.”

With heat and luck, I thought.

“The guy said this one wouldn’t hatch.” He reached over and lifted an egg out of his other moccasin. I touched it. It was leathery, gray, heavier than a hen’s. I thought of rolling it on Bill’s pink chest.

“Where were you this morning?” Donnie asked.

“Turning tricks,” I said, and winked. “What else?”

“Bill was worried.” Donnie took our mugs into the kitchen for refills.

I watched Bill sleep and wondered what would have happened if he and I had discovered the mother turtle in the moonlight. We might have talked about the mate she swam with only once, imagined conception off the Ivory Coast or Togo, offspring never to be seen. Witnessing this event might have made us kinder to each other.

We could have entered the Atlantic with her, then watched until she was our sorrow, out of sight beneath the waves.

Donnie headed back to Disney World that evening. He kept vigil in a haunted house, comforting terrified kids and pointing out “spirits” to the nearsighted, and had to go to work early the next day.

My parents stuffed French bread and gouda into his

rucksack and shook hands with him. Bill and Donnie embraced, then Donnie pivoted to face me; he lifted my chin with his forefinger. “Take care of the bro.”

“I will.”

“Don’t think so much,” he said.

He climbed onto his bike and raced the motor. He shouted thanks again; Robert said it was a pleasure, anytime. Donnie turned to the north, his face glazed with aloe, one hand held steady in the air.

That night Bill and I slept together, by ourselves. We took turns rubbing: Bill asked for percussion and I steadily drummed with the sides of both hands up and down his spine. Then he scratched me, almost roughly, all over.

We were kissing when we heard my parent’s door open and Robert squeezed by our bed. He turned on the stove light, six feet away from us, poured a glass of water and sipped it. My vision was partly obscured by Bill’s arm, but I caught the eerie gleam of Robert’s white pajamas. I saw his tired face. He looked at the window and seemed to study his own reflection. Then he placed the glass in the sink, turned off the light, and groped the same way back. It was so quiet I couldn’t hear our hearts. Bill and I waited in the new dark.

MY MOTHER AND I GOT DRUNK IN A BAR NAMED THE Plucky Duck. She was buying; it was the last whole day of Florida; she’d quarreled with Robert.

“Men,” she said, over gin.

Robert and Bill had driven to Flagler Dogtrack to gamble on greyhounds. My stepfather, after research, anticipated returns on Silver Streak, Cat’s Meow, or Bite. Bill, against all odds, was betting on Jupiter.

“A good fight clears the air.” My mother tried to convince herself.

They had disagreed about the maid. My mother said the rooms didn’t need tidying, since we were checking out soon. Robert said we were paying for the service, so they should be cleaned. If we were already paying, she said, why had he overthrown the Cuban girl every single day? Robert replied that he had felt sorry for her and told my mother to drop the subject.

My mother now sat, swinging her legs, on a tall stool beside me. Young boys shot melodramatic pool behind us. One of them sank the eight on his break, and swore.

“Do you know how to play?” she asked me.

“Nope.”

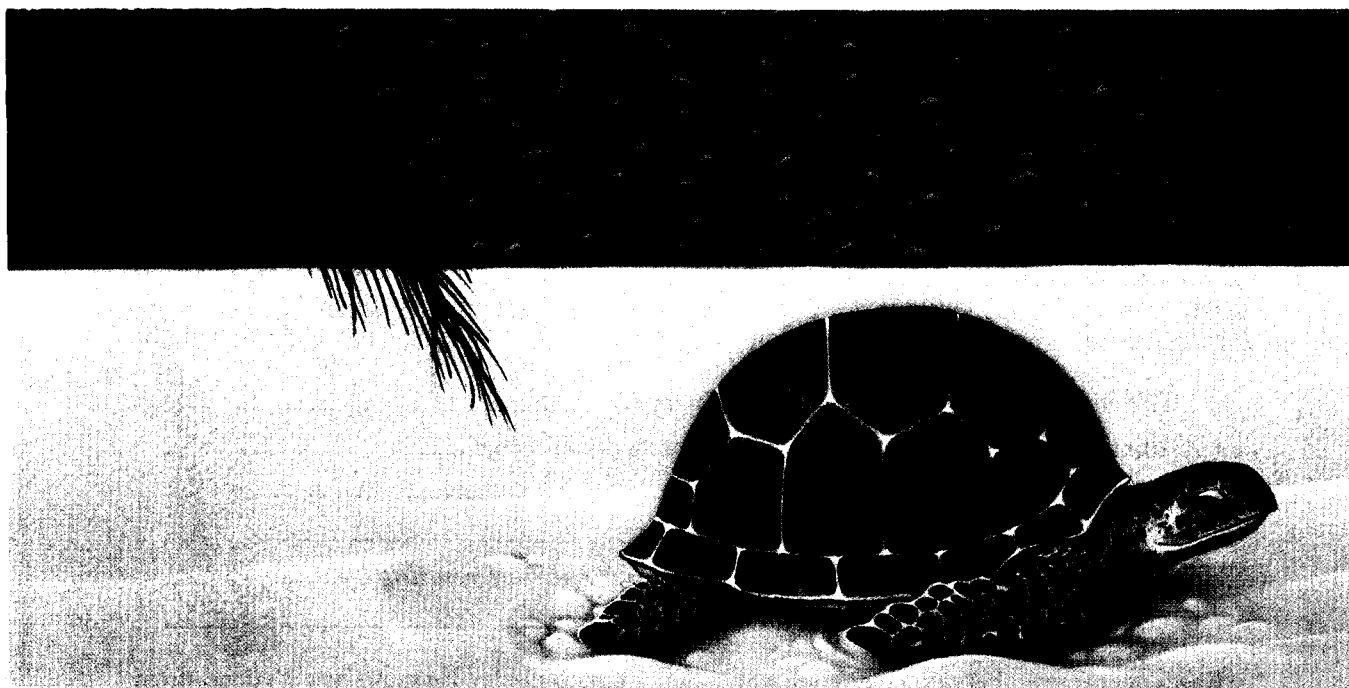
“Does Bill?”

“He’s good.”

“I like Bill,” she said. “Remember some of the fellows you used to go with? The one who used to sleep in his car in front of the house? What was his name?”

“I forget, Mum.”

“He used to brush his teeth in the birdbath.”



"He did not."

"He did. I saw him one morning when I drew the curtain."

"He never owned a toothbrush."

"He drove you to work every day until his car was repossessed." My mother pushed my hair behind my ear. "I think Bill cares for you very much."

"I think so." And with that I admitted, to myself, what I'd always known. I was Bill's only lover; I would measure every other woman with his eyes: could it be her? We had jogged on Riverside, in winter, and his eyes had loved a stranger's round ass and stride. I remembered snow and how cold the day had been. I remembered ice, pale as fingernails, arresting the Hudson.

ROBERT AND BILL TREATED US TO THE MOVIES WITH their winnings from the track. My mother chose the retrospective festival at Hialeah Drive-In: *An American in Paris* and *Gigi*. The cashier's hut displayed a historical plaque, and Robert held up the line to read it.

"This was once a grove," said Robert. "Ruby-red grapefruit. And then it was the biggest farmer's market in the Sunshine State."

My mother surveyed the paved lot. "It doesn't look as though anything ever grew here."

Robert parked behind the projectionist's booth. A Volvo pulled in, on our right, and the two Schnauzers of an elderly couple barked at us and scrambled from front to back side window.

"Somebody shoot them," I said.

Nobody parked on our left.

"I don't think it's ever going to get dark tonight," my mother said. "I heard it hailed in Toronto today." She still felt the liquid afternoon.

"It's spring," Bill said.

The cartoon began, Robert turned up the volume, and we watched faint figures against twilight—dropping from cliffs, freezing, drowning, reappearing and asking for more.

"Can you two see?" she asked. My mother was far away from Robert; she practically sat on the arm of the door.

"We see fine." Bill's finger tightened on the belt loop of my short shorts, pulled me closer.

During the first feature, my mother fell asleep. So did the dogs.

Bill asked me to walk to the playground with him during intermission. We filed, hand in hand, past rows of cars, and heard the speakers answering each other across the lot. There were no children under the huge screen. We climbed the monkey bars and Bill hung upside down, by his knees, until he heard the jingle of coins falling. Then we searched for his lost change by the reflected light.

The second feature started. Bill and I stretched out on the bare ground and looked up.

"Bill," I said. "I want to tell you something."

He slipped his arm under my shoulders and pressed his nose against my cheek.

I told him about Donnie squeezing juice from spikes of aloe, believing a plant could cure his burn. And how if it didn't, he had faith in time, the powers of his own skin. I told Bill what we already knew. Nothing would alter the green beat of my heart. Not nature, time, or love.

"I love you always," he answered. "We'll be unhappy forever." □

How to achieve status now that status seeking has lost its status.

It isn't easy. You might build your own harpsichord or buy a Volvo, run 30 miles a day or become a part-time real estate salesperson. But it's not *what* you do nowadays so much as *how* you do it. You've got to master "parody display," the art of showing off while making fun of showing off. Take this virtually impossible test and see if you're ready to play.

1. *The most important part of a pair of jeans is* _____
2. *You can tell you've just eaten in a chic restaurant when* _____
3. *George Plimpton's telephone number is* _____
4. *When Michael Korda explains power, he is* _____
5. *You can be a loser at the "non-competitive" sport of running by* _____
6. *"Decorative" as applied to a work of art means* _____

Check your answers below and you'll see why you need John Brooks' new book, **SHOWING OFF IN AMERICA**. Brooks explains how conspicuous consumption was once a game for the rich only. "If you have to ask what a yacht cost, you can't afford it," said J.P. Morgan. Then, when Detroit introduced the annual model change, keeping up with the Joneses became a patriotic duty—the engine of America's growing middle-class economy. Today simple economic competition has been replaced by the more sophisticated game of putdown and oneupmanship Brooks calls

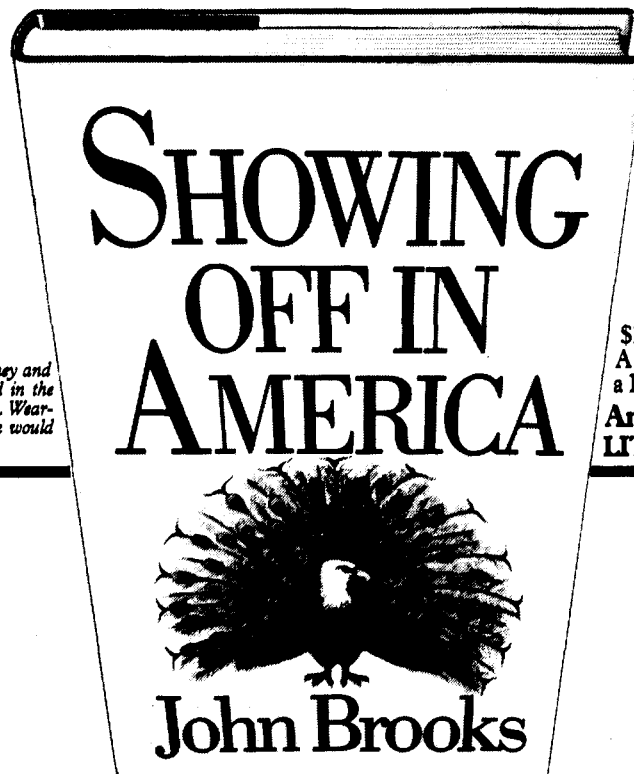
parody display. He shows how it's done—from Rodeo Drive to Lenox Avenue—in the most enlightening and entertaining look at American manners since Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class*.

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"This probing, witty social commentary... exposes the absurdity of image-building that drives us to frenetic pursuit of currently 'in' things and people."—*Publishers Weekly*

Answers:

1. *The label.* 2. *You've spent a lot of money and you haven't had enough to eat.* 3. *Listed in the Manhattan phone book.* 4. *Just kidding.* 5. *Wearing the "wrong" shoes.* 6. *Jackson Pollock would turn over in his grave, but it's praise.*

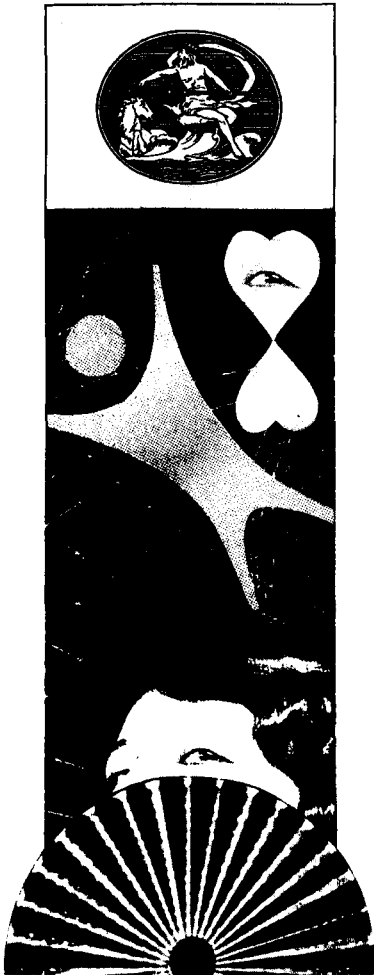


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Q. Isn't it a fact that all those magazine editors who claimed God was dead a few years back have mighty red faces now? Or is it? How old is God?—Vaughn G., Salt Lake City, Utah.

A. If anyone knew how old God was, He would not be God. It takes more than a too-hasty interment of the Deity, however, to make most editors blush.

Q. If I knew famous people, would they like me?—C.T., Rolla, Mo.

A. Tastes of the famous vary, but you may be sure they would like you well enough if there were something in it for them. It was the conclusion of Dr. Ray Wade Beamer of Cornell, who studied over 3,000 famous people, that they would have responded to his questionnaires if he had provided some not inconsiderable inducement.

Q. All those people on Love Boat—do they actually, you know, do it?—Jana Coaple, Scale, Ark.

A. Yes.

Q. Is it true that Swiss chocolatiers are seeking to buy up the Ronald Reagan family? Isn't that why an exotic Kuwaiti-Swiss operator named Achmed Arnaud or Antonin Kif is converting his gigantic oil holdings into cocoadollars?—Jerlyn Wheat, College Station, Pa.

A. You probably mean Habib Auncune, who heads an Iraqi-Haitian digital-terror group. No one can plumb the true motivations of such a man, when he is not dancing away the night with exiled Princess Uami of Imau and their photographer-swain Hsiu, at La Lude.

Q. They do? All of them? On Love Boat?—Riley Coaple, Scale, Ark.

A. Yes.

beth II has given lover-boy Warren Beatty the air, who is he living it up with now?—Joe O., Duxbury, Mass.

A. Beatty, 44, has been seen most often in the company of Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines.

Q. Why aren't I a supernova?—Mrs. H.I., Okla, Okla.

A. Probably due to a combination of factors. You prefer to be identified solely by your husband's initials, you live in Okla, Okla., and you are the kind of person who has to ask the question above. That may not preclude a certain spark.

Q. The Emperor Caligula. Was he what I think he was?—O.R., Bevel, Ind.

A. Gaius Caesar Germanicus, or Caligula, emperor of Rome during some of its most sensational years (37-41 A.D.), delighted in torture and made his horse a consul, but he was not bisexual. That was Tyrone Power.

Q. Tel Polymer, who burst on the TV dramatic scene as Ramirez in Tampa! and founded a secret sect, has three 30-year-old sons, Ham, Juan, and Uwe. Why won't he marry their mother, songstress Ina Bord?—Lula W. Vickers, Lula, W.V.

A. Polymer, 56, is director of FIOD (Freedom Is Our Deal), no sect but an affinity group devoted to the problems of single parents who are being traced by other single parents. In 1963, Polymer was briefly jailed for contemptibility, but charges were waived following a public spectacle by his aunt and uncle, wealthy philanthropists Nana and Trimble Leouvis, who reared him first as a Libertarian and then as a Sikh. Polymer, five foot eleven, is no newcomer to drama.

Q. Now that Britain's Queen Eliza-

Q. Why does no one in my entire tri-

county area ever say "divine"?—Mrs. Dom N., Glen Falls, Wis.

A. It would seem forced.

Q. My husband R. worries that I am involved with a man named Rod who operates the All-U-Can-Crunch Perpetual Salad Bar near our home, but I'm not, but I did go in there for lunch Thursday and, you know, they have the dollar plate and the two-dollar plate and I always try to pile two dollars' worth on the dollar plate because we are frugal and it was raining out Thursday and I had my husband's umbrella hooked over my arm as I went down the line, and the big serving I had of Rod's famous grape-and-carrot congealed salad that he is known for, that nobody else can make, so you know it had to come from Rod's, slid off into my husband's umbrella. Have you ever tried to get congealed salad out of the inside of an umbrella? But that is not my question. I got it all out, I thought, but then Saturday it rained again and my husband used the umbrella to go check the car windows and when he opened it a big dol of Rod's famous salad fell out on his windbreaker. And even though nothing whatever wrong had gone on, I lied. I said I lent the umbrella to our next-door neighbor Mrs. Showalter, who nobody would dream would be involved with Rod, poor thing. I wouldn't have brought Mrs. Showalter into it if I'd thought that if it got back to Mr. Showalter he would worry, because he has his own problems. He is our mail carrier and yesterday he came putt-putting by in his cart with another cart following right alongside him with his supervisor in it, monitoring him all day, with a clipboard. The supervisor is a black man half Mr. Showalter's age. But anyway my husband R. believed me and we are more caught up in each other than ever. Would that be a good story for Love Boat? If it took place on a boat?—J.C., Scale, Ark.

A. Well . . . A luxury cruise ship would not have a . . . Can you actually get lunch where you live for a dollar?

Q. Do world-renowned people ever, like, smell funny or anything? You don't have to answer.—Mrs. Julio Nugent, Overlook, Ariz.

A. Yes. Sure. Sometimes. It doesn't matter.

Roy Blount, Jr., is the author of *Crackers*, a collection of humorous pieces.

BOOKS

UPDIKE'S RABBIT TRILOGY

BY THOMAS R. EDWARDS

RABBIT IS RICH

by John Updike. Knopf, \$13.95.



JOHN UPDIKE BECAME an "important" writer, as we say, with his second novel, *Rabbit, Run*, which was published in 1960 and is still, eight novels and thirteen other books later, one of his best performances. Since then, Updike's imagination has lingered upon Harry Angstrom, called "Rabbit" in his days of glory as a high school basketball star; *Rabbit Redux* (1971) found him a decade older, beset by the troubles and confusions endemic in America during the late 1960s; and now a third book, *Rabbit Is Rich*, whose opening words are "Running out of gas," shows him middle-aged and slowing down some, in what, once again, we recognize to be the present. One somehow hadn't understood that a series was in progress, and Updike's pleasant surprise suggests that the new work needs to be considered as part of a larger whole.

Rabbit, Run now seems distinctly a novel of the 1950s, if only because it takes so little account of the public terms of life in its time. The setting, a small Pennsylvania city in 1959, is lovingly observed, and the culture of common experience—popular songs, television shows, and the like—is duly acknowledged, but it is Harry Angstrom's sense of self, his inward spiritual being, that draws the novelist's attention and energizes his remarkable lyric style. At twenty-six, with high school, athletic stardom, and stateside military service during the Korean War behind him, Harry, a printer's son, has impregnated, and then married, a girl somewhat above him in the social scheme. Harry and Janice have a small son and another child on the way; they live in a drab walk-up while Harry tries to sell kitchen gadgets and Janice neglects the housework, drinks too much, and nurses her discontent. Harry is on the run throughout the novel: from Janice to Ruth, a good-hearted, overweight prostitute, from Ruth back to Janice when their daughter is born, and eventually from both of them, when Janice accidentally lets the baby drown in the

bathtub and Ruth reveals that she's now pregnant too.

This familiar tale, of possessive women and escape-artist men, has little to do in particular with the 1950s in Middle America. It has much more to do with the then rather fashionable religiosity announced by the novel's epigraph from Pascal: "The motions of Grace, the hardness of the heart; external circumstances." Updike intends to look through Harry's apparent human inadequacies, his way of disappointing or hurting those who would love him or at least welcome his love, toward the idea that fascinates the book's rather ineffectual clergyman, Jack Eccles: that (as Harry himself cheerfully reports it) "I'm a mystic. . . . I give people faith." In all the novels, it is suggested—Updike is too canny to insist on it—that Harry, resolutely commonplace in most other ways, has a special spiritual gift, however poorly he understands or articulates it, a persistent sense of what William James in *A Pluralistic Universe* wittily called "a more": "the believer finds that the tenderest parts of his personal life are continuous with a *more* of the same quality which is operative in the universe outside of him and which he can keep in working touch with, and in a fashion get on board of and save himself, when all his lower being has gone to pieces in the wreck."

James's terms are helpful in making out Harry Angstrom. Though his "lower being," the part of him that *ought* to be more observant of what his wife, his lovers, his parents, his children, expect and need from him, does continually go to pieces, he sees at least dimly that "the tenderest parts of his personal life" participate in something more, outside him, and that he can at least hope to save *himself*. At moments of ordinary pleasure—playing basketball or golf, gardening, feeling intimacy with his children, and above all performing the acts of physical love—Harry's life is obscurely but deeply touched

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by intimations of continuity with some savingly larger presence or purpose, intimations that human time does not erase, as Updike suggests by making Harry's response to his newborn granddaughter at the end of *Rabbit Is Rich* plagiarize from what he felt when he first saw his ill-fated baby daughter twenty years before:

... the tiny stitchless seam of the closed eyelid runs diagonally a great length, as if the eye, when it is opened, will be huge and see everything and know everything. In the suggestion of pressure behind the tranquil lid and in the tilt of the protruding upper lip he reads a delightful hint of disdain. She knows she's good. What he never expected, he can feel she's feminine, feels something both delicate and enduring in the arc of the long pink cranium. . .

(*Rabbit, Run*)

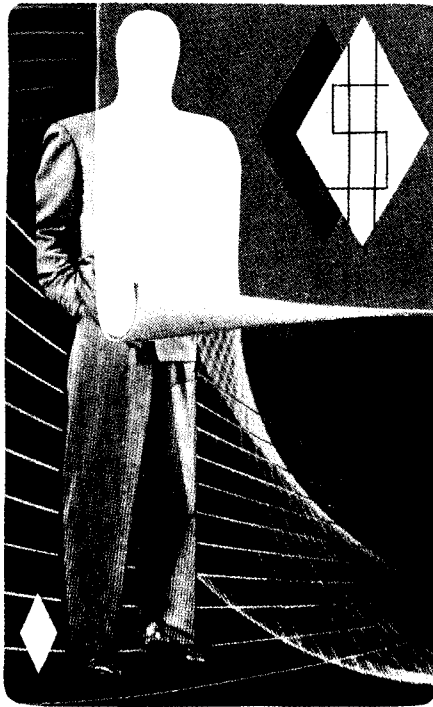
... the baby shows her profile blindly in the shuddering flashes of color jerking from the Sony, the tiny stitchless seam of the closed eyelid aslant, lips bubbled forward beneath the whorled nose as if in delicate disdain, you can feel in the curve of the cranium she's feminine, that shows from the first day.

(*Rabbit Is Rich*)

Such reprises are frequent in the *Rabbit* novels, and they represent Harry's persisting sense of wonder that the world is as it is and that he himself, just as *he* is, is always there to apprehend it. It is what makes him so often disappoint the people around him, and what reconciles them to him, however grudgingly; in his frequent incapacity for good works, he does "give them faith," though they seldom call his gift by that name.

RABBIT, RUN is a tactfully religious novel whose spiritual implications are mostly proposed on the sly, by the not very authoritative Jack Eccles. One of the book's most terrifying moments is when Eccles's helpful, social-worker kind of ministry is challenged by a fire-breathing old Lutheran pastor: "If Gott wants to end misery, He'll declare

the Kingdom now.'" For the purposes of a religious novelist, that's much more like it, and *Rabbit Redux* shows that, a decade later, God has once again decided not to make that declaration just yet. In the meanwhile, Harry has returned to Janice and their son, Nelson, lost track of Ruth, taken up his father's trade of Linotyper, and bought a little tract house in a second-class suburb. His grim, inflexible mother is dying of Parkinson's disease, and Janice works at her father's used-car lot, recently adorned by a Toyota dealership, and (it emerges) is carrying on an affair with Charlie Stavros, her father's



best salesman. Around them all, in 1969, the world is quite visibly falling apart.

Though the religious questions raised by the earlier book continue as an undertone, *Rabbit Redux* is essentially a political novel of a particular historical moment. Its four sections bear epigraphs not from Pascal but from the subliminally bawdy technical talk of space exploration, and even in the hinterlands of Pennsylvania the abiding subjects are the moon shot, Vietnam, the morality of the rebellious young, and black revolution. Harry is an unabashed hawk on all such subjects, to the disgust of trendy Janice and her lover, a decent-minded liberal; but when Janice leaves him to live with Charlie, Harry allows himself to be drawn into the black subworld of Brew-

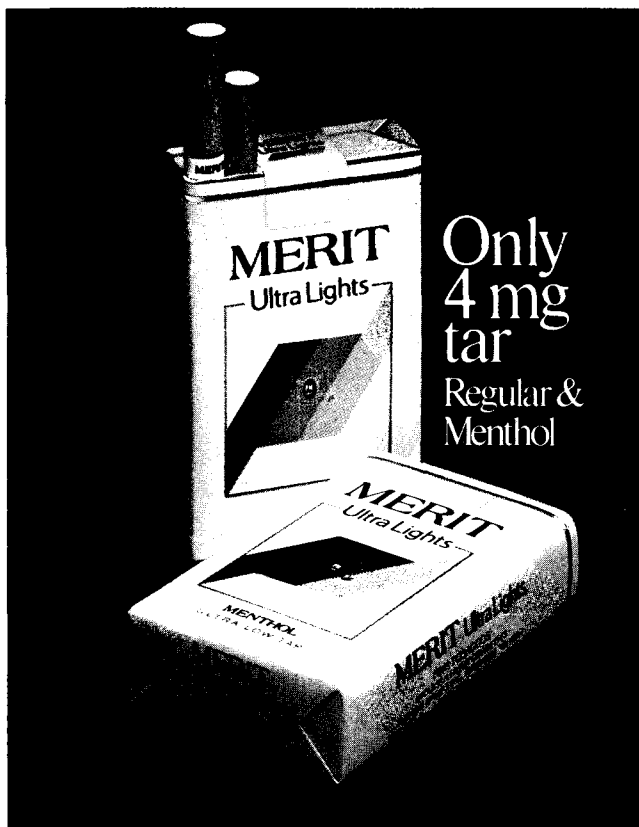
er, from which he brings home Jill, a runaway young rich girl, and Skeeter, a bright, articulate, incorrigibly hostile young black drug dealer and racial messiah, to live with him and poor Nelson. With Jill he extends his sexual repertoire; with Skeeter he samples the pleasures of illegal substances; with Nelson, who adores Jill and (for good reason) is terrified of Skeeter, he begins to enact the Oedipal conflict that will persist into *Rabbit Is Rich*. Jill dies when the neighbors, outraged at such carryings on, burn his house down; Skeeter takes his nihilistic faith into the wilderness; and Harry and Janice once again come back together to pick up the pieces of his lower being.

Rabbit Redux seems to me a flawed work, one of Updike's weaker novels, for several reasons. In it, the pressure of history, which Updike was of course not alone in feeling in those difficult times, threatens to overpower the individuality of his characters, who tend to become representative figures, spokesmen, rather than free dramatic agents. Jill and Skeeter are cartoons of the counterculture; Janice, Charlie, Nelson, and to a degree even Harry himself seem to have been assigned roles rather than permitted to have experiences (only Peggy Fossnacht, the pathetic, overweight friend of Janice's, with whom Harry has a brief sexual interlude, seems to be fully alive); dialogue inclines toward debate, as in Harry's arguments with Charlie Stavros and Skeeter, where the voices speak less for any personal sense of things than for the public positions that everyone was arguing about at the end of the 1960s. As if aware of a danger, Updike made the book virtually a time capsule for 1969, stuffing it with current news stories, music, advertisements, and products; but the effect is of a theater in which the scenery is more vivid and authentic than the actors themselves. Certainly the book's catastrophe, Jill's violent destruction at the hands of bigots, belongs to a tradition of melodrama one had hoped Updike might disdain.

Both *Rabbit, Run* and *Rabbit Redux* end with images of feeling small and safe within large spaces, an acceptance by the microcosmic self of the macrocosmic "more." In *Rabbit, Run*, Harry, in full flight from the entangling demands of domestic life, thinks "he doesn't know, what to do, where to go, what will happen, the thought that

Thomas R. Edwards, professor of English at Rutgers, is the author of *Imagination and Power*.

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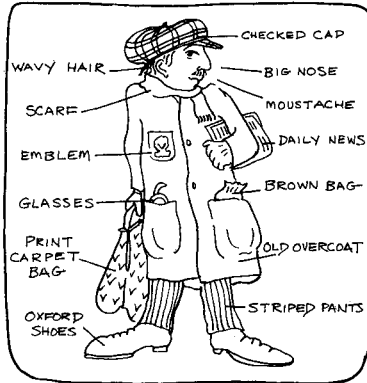
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LITTLE, BROWN

he doesn't know seems to make him infinitely small and impossible to capture. Its smallness fills him like a vastness," and in *Rabbit Redux*, in bed again with Janice like some Ulysses come home to Ithaca, "the space they are in, the motel room long and secret as a burrow, becomes all interior space," and he becomes, in effect, the "microscopic self" of his own penis. At the end of *Rabbit Is Rich*, the small object in a congenial space is not himself but the baby granddaughter in his arms; yet the new novel, however full of problems and anxieties, is governed by the mood of accepted security that its predecessors achieved only after long struggle.

IF THE FIRST TWO Rabbit novels are Ireligious and political, respectively, *Rabbit Is Rich* is clearly a story of the economic life. It leaps ahead another decade, to 1979, discovering an augmented Harry, both richer and fatter, in a depleted public reality. In a world that is running out of gas, he is cleaning up, managing his late father-in-law's Toyota agency and selling fuel-efficient cars like crazy. But death is present in this personal Arcadia, having taken not just Janice's father but both of Harry's parents and (he learns from a news clipping) the demonic Skeeter, and he senses its hand on his mother-in-law; on the declining Charlie Stavros; on Thelma Murkett, with whom he has encyclopedic sex when he and Janice try spouse-swapping on a Caribbean holiday with friends from the country club; on Peggy Fosnacht, who's had a breast removed; and even on himself, as he begins to feel worrisome twinges in the chest. Not too far away, Three Mile Island is behaving rather oddly.

Yet if disaster hovers around Harry and the nation generally, *Rabbit Is Rich* is a story of disasters averted. No one drowns or burns to death—no one, in fact, dies. Updike teases us into anticipating tragedies that never quite occur. Nelson's repeated fender-benders are not major accidents; Harry's new daughter-in-law falls downstairs but does no lasting harm to herself or her unborn child; Nelson meets and is attracted to a girl who may be his illegitimate half-sister, the child Harry gave Ruth twenty years before, but they don't meet again and the threat of incest passes quietly. At the economic level, Harry's ignorant speculation in

the rising gold and silver markets leads not to a wipe-out but to a decent gain; he sells too soon, but as they say on The Street, no one ever went bankrupt by making a profit.

Harry's new prosperity is reflected in the quality of his domestic life. He and Janice have stayed together more or less happily for ten years. Their sex life is down a bit but at least adequate; he still wishes she cooked oftener and better, and they occasionally feel hampered by the presence of her mother, whose house they have shared since the fire in *Rabbit Redux*; but their existence is reasonably equable and contented. They have, in fact, moved toward the exurban good life of Updike's *Couples* and *Marry Me*, which for them centers upon the newish country club they've joined, with golf for him and tennis for her and, for both, considerable drinking and a small circle of fairly congenial friends of similar circumstances and outlooks.

This novel's disruptive force is not Harry or Janice but their son. Nelson is now twenty-three, an intermittent student at Kent State, where he has completed seven semesters in five years; at the beginning of the book he is in Colorado for the summer with a vaguely described girlfriend, hang-gliding and bumming around, but presently he shows up in Brewer with what seems to be quite a different girl, strangely determined to go into the automobile business with his father. Harry finds this an appalling prospect—he wants Nelson to finish college, he strongly doubts Nelson's business judgment (during his trial period Nelson takes a snowmobile as a trade-in and starts buying up old convertibles to sell as collectibles), he doesn't want to fire Charlie Stavros to make room for Nelson. But mostly he just doesn't want Nelson around, sensing (quite rightly) that the boy has both a specific hatred of his father for the deaths of Jill and his baby sister long ago and a more general and conventional desire, in effect, to destroy the father and take his place.

Though others keep assuring Harry that Nelson is much like him, the novel makes this seem true only in very limited ways. Nelson too is frightened by the demands of maturity and human obligation, and he too is a "runner," but both his behavior and Updike's occasional incursions into his consciousness reveal not Harry's hopeful interest in

the terms of his own life but a cynical, surly, grasping, thoroughly stupid, and unimaginative self-concern that is not like Harry at all. When a second girl (the first was a cover) shows up pregnant, Nelson recapitulates Harry's earlier life, insisting on marrying her against his father's advice, treating her quite badly, and deserting her three days before their child is born. But the parallels are formal only, author's contrivances; Nelson seems to me the one failure in *Rabbit Is Rich*, an irate caricature of the "Me Generation" where there might better be a difficult, confused, vulnerable human presence.

But elsewhere *Rabbit Is Rich* is a strong, secure novel, one of Updike's wisest and funniest. It is as full of the cultural details of 1979 as *Rabbit Redux* was full of those of 1969, but now such details are absorbed into the personal, private texture of Harry's experience. A lovely example is the scene where he and Janice, excited by dreams of speculative profit, make love on a bed heaped with newly bought Krugerrands. (One coin gets lost in the turmoil, but in this novel nothing is irretrievably lost, and it turns up between the mattress and the bed frame.) The effect is not some simple irony about confusion or displacement of desires—they make love not to but *through* the gold, treating the things of this world not as objects but as a medium through which to approach "a more." The incident echoes Harry's fantasy in *Rabbit, Run*, when, fleeing from marriage for the first time, he sees a road sign for Wilmington and "wonders what it's like to make it to a Du Pont"—a conjunction of monetary and sexual possession which he repeats near the end of *Rabbit Is Rich*, flying in a jet over Delaware. Like other details in the Rabbit novels, this owes something to Joyce's *Ulysses*—Harry's covetous image of well-booted Du Pont girls flicking their riding crops is in touch with the more passive fancies of another "plebeian Don Juan," Leopold Bloom, for high-society Amazons such as the Honourable Mrs. Mervyn Talboys. But Harry's version fits into his own cultural geography as neatly as does Updike's delighted perception of how well a famous advertising slogan—"YOU ASKED FOR IT, WE GOT IT"—suits the combination of irrepressible randiness and an almost saintly capacity for sympathy and concern in this particular Toyota dealer.

Rabbit Is Rich is the quietest, mel-lowest—without derogation, the most middle-aged—of the Harry Angstrom novels. Updike's famous, rather dangerous powers of style remain under control, and small domestic details are trusted to generate and direct action that earlier depended upon larger and more theatrical devices. Here a remarkable literary talent, far from running out of gas, rides smoothly and efficiently in overdrive, getting maximum mileage from minimal apparent effort. Harry himself is in some ways diminished in his middle age; his acceptance of affluence and domestication may mark a falling off of his faith in his own uniqueness, "his sense," as he describes it to Thelma, his newest lover, "of miracle at being himself, himself instead of somebody else, and his old inkling, now fading in the energy crunch, that there was something that wanted him to find it, that he was here on earth on a sacred assignment." But this is also a story of new beginnings, however modest their possibilities: a fine new Celica loaded with options and "charisma"; an elegant little stone house in, at last, the best suburb; hints that Nelson may finish college and come home to his new family and that he may not be quite as hopeless at business as Harry has feared (the convertibles and even the snowmobile do in fact sell), and above all a new granddaughter to engage the feelings the long-dead daughter and the lost son are no longer there to receive.

Imagining a life like Harry Angstrom's brings into play, I think, Updike's strongest fictional gifts, the gifts that function intermittently in *The Centaur* and are radiantly clear in the Olinger stories and in *Of The Farm*. One of these gifts is an illusionless but tender understanding of how families work—how husbands and wives, parents and children, in the name of love and obligation, do unforgivable things to one another and yet may, in the mysteriousness of their felt bonds, achieve some measure or form of forgiveness. Another is a sense of the sanctity of memory, the mind's power to preserve and in a way redeem a life of errors and losses. Harry, in effect, remembers everything; "new" experience acquires its meaning by becoming, in his mind, a celebration of, or an elegy for, something past, a process of "recollection" in which nothing is ever truly lost.

And, I would suppose, Harry matters

to Updike because in imagining his fictional character the novelist also honors the memory of his own origins. Harry is almost exactly Updike's age, and the "Brewer" of the novels resembles the area around Reading where Updike grew up. Updike, of course, went off to Harvard, Oxford, and literary stardom, while Harry never went to college but was drafted, got married, and slowly and unsteadily proceeded to a much more modest success. Harry is perhaps a kind of Updikeian anti-self, derived from the envy, and pity, that bright and verbal kids feel for ones whose gifts are mainly physical, the adolescent trope of athleticism and sexuality that the mature imagination never quite outgrows. By now, the two men have little in common except a liking for golf and a vigorous sexual imagination, but in Harry, Updike continues to explore and ponder his own beginnings and where they might have led. Such material, with its sobering depth of feeling, is good for a writer whose seriousness is continually dogged by the shadow of his own marvelous facility.

It seems quite possible that we will get another Rabbit novel around 1990—*Rabbit Is Ruined? Rabbit Raffiné?* But as Dante shows, three is a useful number, and a Rabbit trilogy, if it should turn out to be that, would do nicely for a kind of *Commedia* of the ordinary life in our times. Whatever Updike decides, it is good to know that Harry Angstrom is alive and reasonably well in eastern Pennsylvania, and a pleasure to report that the third installment of his saga is a very fine novel indeed. □

DOMESTICATED MADNESS

BY BENJAMIN DEMOTT

THE HOTEL NEW HAMPSHIRE
by John Irving. Dutton, \$15.50.



IN 1960, THE BOOK of the year in academic literary circles was Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel*. It claimed that our authors are obsessed with darkness and the grotesque, disinclined to represent adult heterosexual love or normal familial relationships, and bent on producing a

literature that's fundamentally "nonrealist, sadist, and melodramatic." This was a sensible thesis, on the whole, but, not astonishingly, one can think of writers whose work doesn't support it. The last two novels by a bright new star on our fictional scene, for instance, announce a possibility that *Love and Death* fails to imagine, namely that of conjoining, in a single literary work, the grotesquely dark and the sunny and solid—everyday middle experience of the kind once described as "safe as houses."

The novelist in question is, of course, John Irving, author of the best-selling *The World According to Garp* and of *The Hotel New Hampshire*. Irving came to notice with a book strictly observant, as would have been remarked had the work won more readers, of several Fiedlerian specifications: *Setting Free the Bears* (1968) is about two young males larking around Mitteleuropa on motorbikes, loving and leaving girls, becoming increasingly involved with each other, and committing themselves to no project longer-termed than that of raiding the Hietzinger Zoo, in Vienna, for the purpose of releasing caged animals. Two other novels preceded *Garp*, neither breaking new aesthetic ground. With *Garp* came revelation. That book's bravura array included several of the goriest scenes (a rapist carved to death in the act by his victim, for instance) yet contributed to our letters. But immediately adjacent to those scenes stood chapter upon chapter of domestic trivia—kitchen duty, kid-watching, and one wholly treasureable passage in which an anxious parent dares to observe, secretly, the performance of another parent to whom he has entrusted the care, overnight, of his young.

The Hotel New Hampshire builds on this unusual foundation. In essence it's a family chronicle—a tale of generations of parents coping with children and siblings coping with each other. The chief parents are Win and Mary Berry of Dairy, New Hampshire, a couple brought together after high school at a seaside resort where, on summer jobs, they catch a glimpse of a joyous vocation (innkeeping). The Berry union produces five spirited and amusing

children: Lilly, who becomes a successful novelist (her subject is childhood); Frank, who becomes a literary agent; Franny, who grows up to marry a black pro football player; John, the book's narrator, whose passions include jogging and weight-lifting; and Egg, the youngest child, who's killed in an accident at the age of seven. The story covers a quarter-century, beginning round about 1940, and the principal action takes place in three hotels, each called—for insufficient cause, I think—The Hotel New Hampshire. (The hotels are situated in New Hampshire, Austria, and Maine.)

Family dailiness—traditional sitcom material—is in nearly constant view



throughout the novel. Father and mother tell stories about their youth to their children. Grandfather teaches grandson his special athletic skills. Mother intercedes when older siblings try to force their juniors into premature knowingness. Mother speaks out against slovenliness. ("Your room, Lilly," Mother said. "What am I going to say about your room?") Children tease each other ferociously, engage in fist-fights, learn to work together in the family business, learn to drive cars, learn forbearance, find their affection for one another strengthening over time. And toward the end, children are seen taking up parental roles, caring for the elders whose hour as nurturers and protectors has begun to fade. Four of the eight family members with whom this book begins are gone at the

end, but the survivors are close-knit, and a new Berry baby is on the way, assuring the continuity of the generations.

Simple, unsadistic stuff. But, as I've hinted, it's conjoined with matter remote from everyday, and the combination creates surprising narrative rhythms and a sharply distinctive tone. *The Hotel New Hampshire* is structured as a succession of shrewdly prepared explosions of violence, each of which blends the hideous and the comic, and projects a fresh length of story line that hisses forward into the next blowup almost before the dust of the last has settled. A typical sequence runs as follows: Franny Berry is gang-raped by members of a prep school football team on Hallowe'en; on the same day, her father, Win Berry, takes the family pet, an ancient Labrador named Sorrow who is dear to Franny but troublingly afflicted with flatulence, to the local vet to be put to sleep. Conscience of his fearfully violated younger sister's need for the comfort of her pet, Frank Berry races to the animal hospital in hope of saving the beast. He's too late, but he does recover Sorrow's body, and, having earlier learned taxidermy in a biology course, resolves to stuff the dog and offer it to his sister as a gift. New narrative fuse lit and burning, obviously, and explosion is imminent. It occurs a chapter later, on Christmas Day. Stuffed and mounted in an "attack" pose, hidden in an upstairs closet, Sorrow suddenly springs out at Grandfather Berry when the latter, working out with weights in his room, accidentally knocks open the closet door:

... before I could get my breath back and tell my grandfather that it was only a Christmas present for Franny—that it was only one of Frank's awful projects from down at the bio lab—the old [man] slung his barbell at the savage attack dog and threw his wonderful lineman's body back against me (to protect me, no doubt; that must have been what he meant to do) . . . [and] dropped dead in my arms.

The rape-taxidermy sequence shuttles swiftly between the farcical and the pathetic. Franny Berry's anguished weeping is in our ears as we watch her brother push the stiffening dog's body into a trash bag (the vet's wife murmurs, "It's so sweet"). We jump cut from Franny's shattered effort to con-

Benjamin DeMott, a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*, is Andrew Mellon Professor of the Humanities at Amherst.

HERE'S WHAT'S NOW BEING SAID ABOUT TOBACCO SMOKE IN THE AIR.

Scientist disputes findings of cancer risk to nonsmokers

WASHINGTON (AP) — A scientist, after reviewing studies on the cancer risk of nonsmokers exposed to the cigarette smoke of others, has asserted that there is insufficient evidence to conclude that this so-called "passive smoking" poses a significant health risk.

Epidemiologist Lawrence Garfinkel said Friday that his examination of data in two large studies led him to conclude that too many other variables must be taken into account in determining a person's cancer risk.

He said no studies to date have shown that passive smoking poses a health hazard.

nonsmoking husbands.

The Tobacco Inst has raised questions about the cigarette industry's study. The inst. association for U.S. manufacturers, earlier in its evaluation of Hara's findings, indicated that he had committed a statistical error which invalidated his conclusions. Hara tended that no mistake had been made and stood by his findings.

Garfinkel's work was in the June issue of the National Cancer Institute's journal.

He concluded that neither

Non-smoker cancer 'risk' questioned

SEATTLE (AP) — Contrary to recent findings by the Japanese, non-smoking women married to cigarette smokers run little if any increased risk of lung cancer, an American Cancer Society scientist said Wednesday.

Lawrence Garfinkel of New York, the society's vice president for epidemiology and statistics, also commented on other recent cancer studies, saying there is not yet sufficient evidence to conclude that passive smoking poses a health hazard.

ing" — inhaling another's smoke — are difficult to study and both the Japanese study and the cancer society study may be inadequate, Garfinkel noted.

Autopsy studies of lung tissue in non-smokers "have uncovered virtually no signs of lesions usually recognized as precancerous," he said. Therefore, passive smoking "cannot play more than a small role in the development of cancer."

Garfinkel drew his data from two studies: one of 17½ years and 148,000 women and 148,000 men.

He commented on a Harvard study last March, which found a possible link between cigarette smoke and the pancreas. He said that "further investigation is needed."

He said that at this point is too little evidence to confirm the link.

Garfinkel wrote in the June issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*: "To obtain data on passive smoking in non-smoking women, an epidemiological study should be specifically designed to measure their exposure as accurately as possible." Neither the research done by himself or by Hiraizumi is structured to give that result, Garfinkel said.

Study Downplays Nonsmoker Risk

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nonsmoking women whose husbands smoke have little if any more chance of contracting lung cancer than women whose husbands don't smoke, a new American Cancer Society study concluded Friday.

The study, prepared by epidemiologist Lawrence Garfinkel, is insufficient evidence so far to conclude that passive smoking — nonsmokers inhaling

second-hand smoke — poses a health hazard.

Garfinkel's conclusions are a well-known fact, he said. He claimed to have proved that passive smoking does not develop a greater risk than those with no exposure to cigarette smoke.

He said that his work identified a different problem in the study of passive smoking.

Garfinkel said that passive smoking in nonsmoking wives of cigarette smokers is a health hazard. He said that passive smoking in nonsmoking wives of cigarette smokers is a health hazard.

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New study contradicts non-smokers' risk

WASHINGTON (AP) — Non-smoking women whose husbands smoke have little if any more chance of contracting lung cancer than if their husbands don't smoke, a new American Cancer Society study concluded Friday.

The study, prepared by epidemiologist Lawrence Garfinkel, found there is insufficient evidence so far to conclude that passive smoking — non-smokers inhaling

near smokers — is a hazard to non-smokers.

The results contradict the conclusions of a well-publicized Japanese study released in January.

A Japanese researcher said he had proved that non-smoking wives whose husbands smoked developed lung cancer at a much greater rate than those with non-smoking husbands. Some questions

have been raised about the Japanese study.

Garfinkel wrote in the June issue of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*: "To obtain data on passive smoking in non-smoking women, an epidemiological study should be specifically designed to measure their exposure as accurately as possible."

Neither the research done by himself or by Hiraizumi is structured to give that result, Garfinkel said.

FROM CIGARETTES

2nd-Hand Smoke Risk Discounted

SEATTLE (UPI) — Non-smoking wives of smokers run no more risk of lung cancer than non-smoking women married to non-smoking men.

Lawrence Garfinkel, of New York, the American Cancer Society's vice president for epidemiology and statistics, says second-hand cigarette smoke appears to

play a small role in the development of cancer.

Garfinkel said that passive smoking in nonsmoking wives of cigarette smokers is a health hazard.

Several months ago, headlines around the world trumpeted alarming news. A Japanese study was claiming that non-smoking wives of smokers had a higher risk of lung cancer because of their husbands' tobacco smoke. That scared a lot of people and understandably so, if this claim was the last word.

But now new headlines have appeared. First, because several eminent biostatisticians found an apparent statistical error in the Japanese calculations—raising serious questions about the study.

Second, because Lawrence Garfinkel, the statistical director of the American Cancer Society who is opposed to smoking, published a report covering 17 years and nearly 200,000 people in which he indicated that "second-hand" smoke has insignificant effect on lung cancer rates in nonsmokers.

If you'd like to know more about these developments, write Scientific Division, The Tobacco Institute, 1875 I St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

BEFORE YOU BELIEVE HALF THE STORY, GET THE WHOLE STORY.

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vince herself that her assailants haven't really damaged the "me in me" to a series of one-liners exchanged by brothers discussing dog-stuffing. (Brother John: "I don't know if Franny will like that." Brother Frank: "It's the next-best thing to being alive.") We're never in doubt of Frank Berry's sympathy for his sister's suffering, but the gags superimposed upon this sympathy do contort it. And comparable contortions abound elsewhere in the book's action. The primary moment of catharsis occurs when the Berry children, with aides, manage to terrify the rapists' ringleader with a brilliantly staged threat that he himself will be raped by a bear. The book's narrative crisis occurs when Father Berry handily smashes (with a Louisville Slugger) a ring of terrorists in the Austrian Hotel New Hampshire who are about to blow up Vienna's opera house and take the Berry family hostage. Always, the sympathy and solidarity of the family members are in evidence—qualities placing the Berrys firmly in a world of light and affirmation. But often the visible deeds and spoken words verge upon the violently sadistic, or the black comic, or the melodramatically grotesque.

And the author's taste for incongruity affects characterization as well as action. Each of the Berrys is normal in his or her feeling for parents and siblings—loving, concerned, loyal:

"... we *aren't* eccentric, we're *not* bizarre. To each other," Franny would say, "we're as common as rain." And she was right: to each other, we were as normal and nice as the smell of bread, we were just a family.

But it's a fact that the Berry kids don't invariably sound "normal and nice." On the first page of the book, one child speculates to another about the precise date when their parents "started screwing"; from then on the children's sprightly R-rated obscenities decorate virtually every paragraph. Nor can it be said that these folks are untouched by deviance. Franny Berry is, for an interval, caught in a lesbian love affair. She and John Berry are in love with each other and consummate their incestuous passion in an extended sexual bout. Frank Berry is an out-of-the-closet homosexual given to expressions of glee in his aberrancy. Lilly Berry is a suicide.

The entire family, furthermore,

thrives on exposure to ills of the public world that more conventional families labor to avoid. Day in and day out in Vienna, the Berrys deal not only with a gang of terrorists (resident on one floor of their hotel) but with a sly, dirty-talking circle of prostitutes (resident on another floor of the place). They're beset both by racists and by enraged victims of racism. They're even obliged to learn how to handle the media. (Lilly Berry's fans, hyped into a condition of hysterical idolatry, are infuriated with her relatives for their unwillingness to cooperate in establishing her as a secular saint.) If, in short, the quality of the children's sense of fun and feeling for each other stands forth as "normal and nice," neither the children's environment nor their individual natures quite



warrant those labels. Nightmare and sunshine simultaneously, once again.

A fair question about this pairing is: What's it for? Does juxtaposing the quotidian and the melodramatic—the normative and the eccentric, the healthy and the sadistic—offer much besides shock value? Doesn't it become merely confusing? John Irving's triumph in his last book was traceable, I believe, to the brisk ingenuity with which he dispatched these doubts. *Garp*, as will be remembered, is in part about a novelist and his audience—a novelist plagued, like most, by readers whose interest seems sometimes to derive exclusively from curiosity about whether his stories are autobiographical. The most horrible episode of rape and murder in the book is presented as a chapter of a novel written by T. S. Garp shortly after losing a beloved child in an automobile crash. As one reads the episode, one isn't merely titillated by the grisly and forbidden; one is

shown, dramatically, how a writer transforms personal experience into an achieved imaginative narrative that, despite being complexly rooted, in every detail, in "real life," is remote from any set of actual happenings. Graphically depicted sexual encounter becomes, through elegant indirection, a lesson about art and its sources, a means of access to a father's inexpressible grief, and an instrument capable of reconciling totally opposite modes of feeling.

I confess I suspected that this feat—the purposeful linking of the normative and the perverse or hateful—couldn't be brought off a second time, but I was wrong. Less bloody than *Garp*, *The Hotel New Hampshire* nevertheless is rich, from start to finish, in incongruous juxtapositions, and it offers genuine pleasures. I don't pretend to know all of Mr. Irving's secrets, but I'm fairly certain about one of them. Early in the book the reader is nudged into noticing resemblances between the narrative proceedings at hand and those of a fairy tale—the only literary form that has ever satisfactorily tamed the horrible. Half-magical attachments between human and animal creatures (men and bears) hold our attention from the start. John Irving reflects time and again on dreams, wish fulfillment, happy endings. And in the touching final page, he steps forward to acknowledge that he and his reader have been living in a "fairy-tale hotel," spinning wish fulfillments: "We give ourselves a sainted mother, we make our father a hero; and someone's older brother, and someone's older sister—they become our heroes, too. We invent what we love, and what we fear. There is always a brave, lost brother—and a little lost sister, too. We dream on and on: the best hotel, the perfect family. . . ." Guided by the narrator, we intuit that this work (when the grotesque heaves into sight) is not only about the unbearable but about our instinct for refusing the unbearable—not only about the worst of life but about our capacity for willing away the worst. That intuition does much, throughout, to soothe our unease with contortions and contrarities.

We're also soothed because a good deal of the worst in *The Hotel New Hampshire* really is willed away. A few dread events in the story—a plane crash, a blinding—are irreversible. But, as it turns out, they're exceptions to the

book's rule. Brother and sister fall in love and sexually embrace—but their embrace is a means of canceling the memory of the cruel rape: before the end Franny Berry transcends her incestuous passion and her lesbian attachment, and gives herself fully to marriage, procreation, health. Frank Berry, self-absorbed homosexual, is led out of his enclosure into the sunlight of selflessly generous relationships with both siblings and elders. A young woman once so convinced of her ugliness that she went about the world in disguise is helped to discover her beauty, arrives at a positive view of herself, becomes the means through which John Berry conquers his infatuation with his sister.

And as it goes with individuals, so it goes with impersonal forces of negation. The racism and sexism that stalk the opening chapters bow in shame at the conclusion. Blacks and whites come together in harmony that is rooted in perception of their shared humanity. The brutalizing rapist Caliban who attacked Franny understands that he too must alter his ways. And—highly impressive utopian accomplishment—the terrible energy of rape comes to seem less real, less momentous, than the infinitely loving, patient process by which a rape crisis center brings about, in the abused, the rebirth of trust. We occupy, in other words, a world wherein nearly everything comes out as we should like, the formal and psychological sequences moving from tragedy to comedy, from despair to hope. And, to repeat, because we begin to feel, close to the start, the inevitability of that fairytale progress, the intermingling of destructive and nurturing elements just escapes the taint of arbitrariness.

AN EXCEEDINGLY DENSE and clever work, in sum. Conceivably it will provoke attempts—full of humorless posturing outrage, as fatuous in their way as philistine panegyric—to prove the author to be a dollar-maddened opportunist. Writers who seem intent on having their art both ways (Let's see: How about a good salty mix of *The Waltons* and Genet?) are often spanked as opportunists. But that line seems wrongheaded to me. John Irving's love and squalor please us precisely because his authorial presence seems unsmudged by baseness—innocent, cheerful, bouncily energetic, at times inco-

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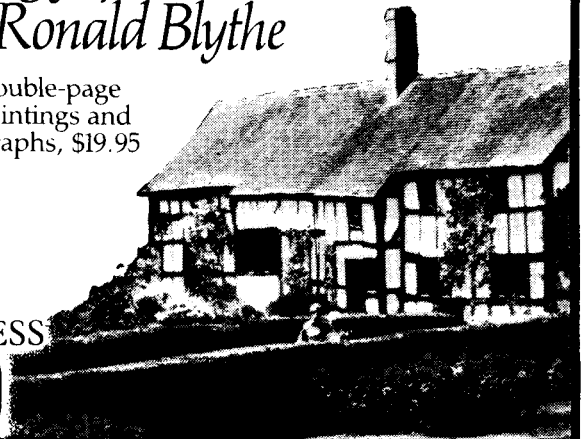
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herent, but always beyond reach of exploitative meanness.

This isn't to say that every objection to *The Hotel New Hampshire* should be discounted. I found a certain frailty in the book's emotional life; feelings such as terror, lust, and *ressentiment* need powerful invocation to be persuasive, and the author's charm and jokey off-handedness—his very fascination with his eye for incongruity—conspire to muffle and miniaturize them. (Grief at the loss of parent or child disappears from the page almost before its weight can be imagined, like an effortlessly cleaned barbell.) I also find the preoccupation with rape, here and in *Garp*, disconcerting. And although the novelist *Garp* is explicit in warning us off from reviewers who utter such phrases, I'm obliged to declare that John Irving doesn't strike me as a writer of significant intellectual depth. "Everything is a fairy tale," says the narrator of *The Hotel New Hampshire* confidently, and I can think of several greatly admired texts (one of them is Heidegger's famous Hölderlin essay, contending that poetical fancy is the foundation of our being on this earth) that develop closely related themes. John Irving, however, seems far more comfortable with obliviousness—with our incapacity for seeing beyond the self-endorsements of culture, class, and enclave—than are the subtlest minds who have celebrated imaginative power. And, for me, his books' frequent allusion to Scott Fitzgerald only underlines the fact that the example of that writer's moral penetration has been missed. Irving's work brings to mind lesser heroes—J. D. Salinger, Kurt Vonnegut, the Beatles.

Like those performers at their best, this author is playful, tender, ebullient, by turns silly and sweet. And, most important, he has within him a strong idealizing tendency, which, at an hour when nothing is more conservatively chic than despising the ideal, deserves regard as precious. His one-man struggle to make the novel safe for—or at least hospitable to—domesticity isn't, I grant, a mark of genius; neither is his effort to persuade us that people caught in the muck of habitual obscenity—or aberrancy or phony liberation—truly want out. But at their core both efforts are kind and sane as well as funny and diverting: everybody smart will know enough to wish them well. □

SHORT REVIEWS



THE CARE OF TIME by Eric Ambler. Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$11.95. Mr. Ambler's latest thriller starts with a bomb and bangs along with forged documents, terrorist gangs, and international intrigues, all of which descend on a normally mild-mannered literary man who would prefer to have no part of any of them. The tale is exciting and often funny as well, which makes it very fine Ambler.

THE BEECHERS by Milton Rugoff. Harper & Row, \$19.95. There were a great many Beechers—Harriet the anti-slavery novelist, Catharine the feminist educator, and a slew of brothers who followed their father, Lyman, into the pulpit. In one way or another, Beechers were involved in most of the major causes and intellectual wrangles of nineteenth-century America, and Mr. Rugoff's group biography solidly recreates both the remarkable family and the period that it influenced.

THE CASE OF THE SLIDING POOL by E.V. Cunningham. Delacorte, \$10.95. Aside from the mild piquancy of a Nisei Zen Buddhist on a California police force, the interest of this murder mystery is not whodunit but who was done. Detective Sergeant Masuto is confronted with a mere skeleton, and tracking the original owner of the bones (who unfortunately had perfect teeth) makes a pretty puzzle. It would be even prettier if the author had cut some obvious padding from the text.

THE MAHARAJAH AND OTHER STORIES by T. H. White. Putnam's, \$12.95. Some of the items in this posthumous collection are hardly worth the trouble that must have gone into rounding them up, but one—"The Spaniel Earl"—is a memorable oddity, and several others are good spook stories. Daylight realism was not White's strong point.

PRACTICING HISTORY by Barbara W. Tuchman. Knopf, \$16.50. Ms. Tuchman's selected essays are elegantly written, as is to be expected, and con-

tain sharp insights into literature and politics as well as the writing of history. She is particularly opposed to the academic demand for objective history, asserting that "If such a thing as a 'purely objective' historian could exist, his work would be unreadable—like eating sawdust." This is the one point on which Ms. Tuchman's judgment can be questioned by a long-suffering book reviewer. Thanks to the publish-or-perish system, the purely objective historian does exist on many faculties, and to compare his work to the eating of sawdust is to flatter it.

THE EUROPEAN AND THE INDIAN by James Axtell. Oxford, \$19.95. Professor Axtell introduces his Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America with an explanation of what ethnohistory is: a cross between history and anthropology. He makes the mix sound novel and complicated, but the essays themselves appear, to a reader who is neither historian nor anthropologist by trade, to be merely what any sensible scholar would naturally do when dealing with large groups and general trends rather than with individual people and specific events. The author covers such topics as the origin of scalping, the influence of their Indian neighbors on early settlers, mixed marriages, and the ease with which Indians converted white captives into loyal tribesmen as opposed to the failure of whites to convert Indians into any semblance of Englishmen. Professor Axtell's essays are informative, well-written, and reinforced with much contemporary quotation.

PORK by Cris Freddi. Knopf, \$10.95. Sentimental people-as-garrulous-animals stories, bobbing along in the wake of *Watership Down*, where they deserve to sink.

MASTER DRAWINGS BY PICASSO edited by Gary Tinterow. Braziller-Fogg Art Museum, \$45.00. Picasso's drawing materials were almost as diverse as his styles and ideas, producing, in the 102 examples printed here, an enchantingly lively display. Mr. Tinterow's notes are extensive, useful, and often shrewd, as when he attributes Picasso's fondness for clowns and actors to his feeling that "he shared with them a societal license to inspire and amuse, but always from the outside."

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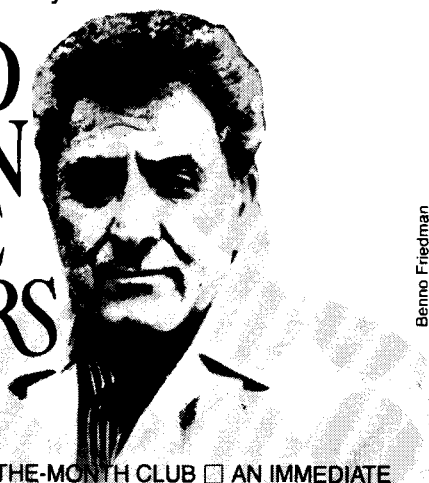
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SURVIVING THE FLOOD by Stephen Minot. *Atheneum*, \$14.95. It is Mr. Minot’s conceit that Ham, son of Noah, should, at age 900, report what really went on aboard the Ark, which carried some unlisted passengers but no elephants. The resultant novel is droll, irreverently plausible, consistently entertaining.

DEATH NOTES by Ruth Rendell. *Pantheon*, \$9.95. The murder victim is so agreeable that one truly cares about his death, while the plot of Ms. Rendell’s mystery involves an extraordinarily large, gaudy, and beguiling red herring. A satisfactory combination.

VOICES IN THE GARDEN by Dirk Bogarde. *Knopf*, \$12.95. The theme of Mr. Bogarde’s novel is pretense—the contrast between what people really are and the roles they choose to act in the world. The world, in this case, is a luxurious Riviera villa where assorted characters play out a bittersweet harlequinade. The hero and heroine are likable young people with just enough of a naughty streak to maintain suspense. The dialogue is clever, and the book is enticing reading all the way.

FATHER-DAUGHTER INCEST by Judith Lewis Herman. *Harvard*, \$15.95. Dr. Herman is psychiatric director of the Women’s Mental Health Collective in Somerville, Massachusetts, a position that has enabled her to study and interview women who have been disastrously subjected to incestuous fathers and also women who, less disastrously, suffered what she terms “seductive fathers.” Her findings both contradict the notions of those of her male colleagues who dismiss incest as generally harmless and discredit the practices of the justice system, which she describes as “Virtually an all-male club . . . abysmally ignorant and careless of children.” The book includes recommendations for alteration and improvement in the services offered incest victims and the practices of psychiatrists and court officers, but the author is glumly aware that incest will persist as long as the patriarchal family system produces men who cannot “distinguish between sexuality and affection.”

BREAKTHROUGH by Moshe Dayan. *Knopf*, \$15.00. A portion of this book originally appeared in *The Atlantic*.

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Answers
to the
September
Puzzler,
“ACROSS
AND DOWN”

1	D	R	A	F	T	E	E	T	O	U	C	H
10	O	A	S	I	S	S	T	E	M	P	L	E
	W	G	C	L	I	P	A	S	E	S	U	N
13	N	O	E	L	S	A	M	T	B	E	E	R
15	R	U	N	I	P	R	E	A	C	T	R	O
	E	T	T	P	U	T	S	T	U	C	C	O
20	C	A	S	T	R	O	L	O	W	A	M	S
	T	T	M	U	S	C	A	R	O	L	E	T
26	R	O	A	D	L	O	V	C	O	U	N	T
28	E	R	N	C	A	N	I	N	E	M	I	A
30	S	A	T	I	N	Y	S	B	R	E	A	K
	S	H	A	K	E	T	H	I	S	T	L	E

The ten unclued Acrosses can combine with DOWN (the unclued Down) to make compound words.

Across. 1. D(RAFT)EE 10. O-AS-IS 11. TEMPLE (double def.) 12. LIPASE (anag.) 13. NO(V)ELS 14. BE-ER (pun) 17. REACT (anag.) 18. STUCCO (homophone) 20. C-ASTRO 24. MUSCA (anag.) 26. RO(A)D 28. ERN (homophone) 29. CA-NINE 30. SA(TIN)Y
Down. 2. RAG-OUT 3. AS(CENT)S 4. FL-LIP (rev.) 5. ESPARTO (hidden) 6. TEST-A-TOR 7. UP-SET 8. CLUER (anag.) 9. HENROOST (anag.) 11. TAM-E 15. REC(TR)ESS (rt rev.) 16. PURSLANE (anag.) 18. SLAV-ISH (pun) 19. CAL(U)-MET 21. WO(O)ERS (anag. + o) 22. MEN-IAL (lai[d] rev.) 23. TO-RAH 24. MAN-TA(n) 25. CO-NY 27. (s)TAKE

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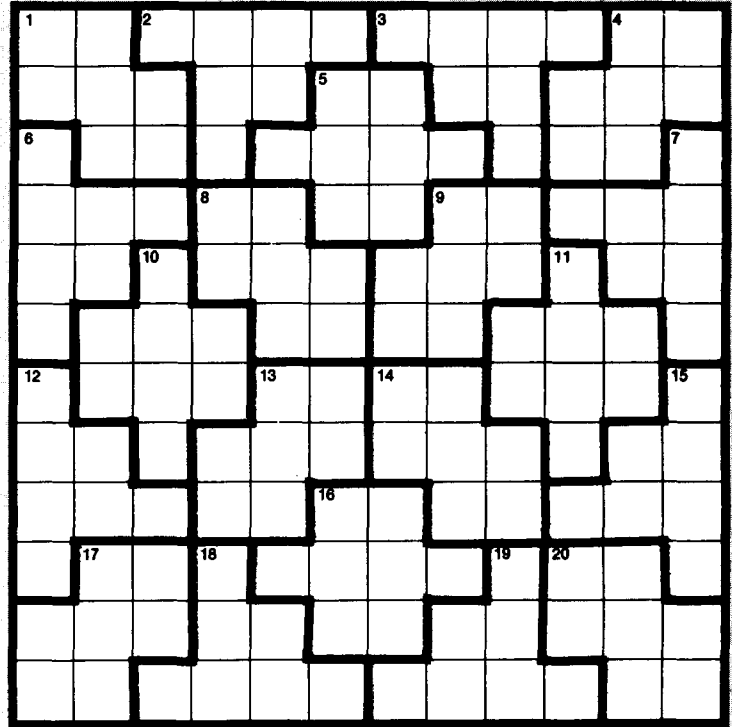
THE ATLANTIC PUZZLER

BY EMILY COX AND HENRY RATHVON

PATCHWORK

This puzzle diagram is a thing of Threads (across answers a-s) and Patches (areas numbered 1-20). Solvers must determine the starting point for entry of the Threads, which proceed in the given sequence (a-s), left to right, moving down the diagram. A word exiting the diagram at the lower right will continue in the upper left-hand corner. Each Patch's letters are to be entered in mixed order; these letters should help solvers determine where the sequential Threads belong. Answers include three proper nouns. Punctuation may be used deceptively.

*The solution to last month's
Puzzler appears on page 108.*



THREADS

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>a. Execute crazy quilt idea</p> <p>b. Twerp wearing old waistcoat</p> <p>c. Touching beach boy?</p> <p>d. Nun keeping in evil</p> <p>e. Mathematical function described by spinning tail of car</p> <p>f. With skimpy garb, behold short length covering considerable amount</p> <p>g. Land on silvery metal in copper coin</p> <p>h. A profit besides</p> <p>i. A phosphorus source is plainly visible</p> <p>j. Foolish sheep going back after a plant</p> <p>k. Upset with a haberdasher's request?</p> <p>l. Shake with whirling dervish after introduction</p> <p>m. Work keeps sports official in clover</p> | <p>n. Feller clasped by college girl used persuasion</p> <p>o. Modified racer (turbo device under the hood)</p> <p>p. Editor returned <i>Study in Advertisement</i> with <i>No Exit</i> (hyphenated)</p> <p>q. God fills request for abundance</p> <p>r. Brawler rashly gives the bird</p> <p>s. Croc loose in low country</p> | <p>8. Formulated statement of beliefs about a comet's tail (7)</p> <p>9. Directed not to vanish while circling globe (7)</p> <p>10. Hot rod careening into bovine is recognized (8)</p> <p>11. Republican entering tavern with Swedish opera singer is hardly able to see (8)</p> <p>12. Wine concocted by Irish freedom fighters (7)</p> <p>13. Clergyman owns a nuclear device (7)</p> <p>14. Magician's struggle with handcuff mechanism (7)</p> <p>15. Five and ten ransacked—stop outside (7)</p> <p>16. Scrap from plane is in great supply (8)</p> <p>17. Uncharacteristic of regressive rule (7)</p> <p>18. Hide in the past with California clothing (7)</p> <p>19. In Attic or in Theban city of old (7)</p> <p>20. Settle in booth (7)</p> |
|---|--|---|

PATCHES

1. Seeking inconclusively for painkiller (7)
2. Put an end to adolescent snack bar (7)
3. Doctors' vigor is remarkable (7)
4. Sparsely scattered garnish (7)
5. Standard place contains a sponge (8)
6. Break stringed instrument, consumed (7)
7. Pop singer taking ill in horror story (7)

Note: The instructions above are the special instructions for this month's puzzle. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, write to The Atlantic Reprint Department, enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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